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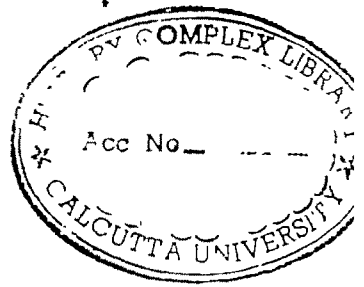
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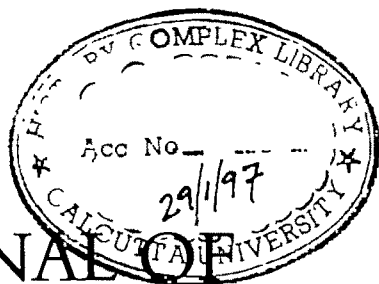
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Conference Announcements

There will be a conference on Aesthetic Value at the Open University, Milton Keynes, UK, on 10–11 May 1996. The speakers will be Kendall Walton, Mary Mothersill, Peter Lamarque, Robert Hopkins, and Derek Matravers. For information (including information about student subsidies) contact Derek Matravers at The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK; e-mail D.C.Matravers@open.ac.uk

The Annual Conference of the British Society of Aesthetics will be held at St Edmund Hall, Oxford on 29 August–1st September 1996. Registration and full board—£110 (sterling). Enquiries to Richard Woodfield, Secretary, The British Society of Aesthetics, The Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, NG1 4BU, UK. Tel: 44 (0) 115 941 8418; Fax: 44 (0) 115 948 6403.

The British Society of Aesthetics is organising a joint conference on Beauty, Ugliness and Other Aesthetic Categories with aestheticians from the Low Countries on 26–29 September 1996. Enquiries to Richard Woodfield, Secretary, The British Society of Aesthetics, The Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, NG1 4BU, UK. Tel: 44 (0) 115 941 8418; Fax: 44 (0) 115 948 6403.

POETRY AND ABSTRACTION

M. W. Rowe

THERE IS a long-running debate as to whether poetry should concern itself with abstract thought. Burke¹ and Winters² are emphatically of the opinion that it should, while Yeats,³ Hulme⁴ and Schreiber⁵ are equally adamant that it should not. In this essay I shall argue that poetry *can* deal with abstractions, while acknowledging that there is something right in the intuition that poetry, even at its most abstract, deals with thought in a more sensuous and personal way than, for instance, philosophy.

The reason most commonly adduced for supposing that poetry cannot deal with abstractions is the belief that poetry should summon up mental images of the things it describes. As abstract thought is, by its very nature, unimageable, it cannot therefore have a place in poetry. Hulme, for example, writes:

In prose as in algebra concrete things are embodied in signs or counters which are moved about according to rules, without being visualized at all in the process . . . Poetry, in one aspect at any rate, may be considered as an effort to avoid this characteristic of prose . . . It is a compromise for a language of intuition [used in the Kantian sense of 'perception'] which would hand over sensations bodily. It always endeavours to . . . make you see a physical thing, to prevent you gliding through an abstract process.⁶

Before any useful attempt can be made to evaluate this idea, we must consider which version of the image theory is most plausible. It is encountered in at least three forms.

- (i) *The Meaning Theory*. The meaning of a word is the image associated with it. Literature is composed of words and therefore, like all other forms of meaningful language, it will evoke images.
- (ii) *The Aesthetic Theory*. The meaning of a word is not an image, and we can understand scientific and philosophical works perfectly well without imaging at all. It is, however, the special prerogative of literature to bring images before the reader's mind; the reader who is properly engaged with a literary text will have images of what is described.
- (iii) *The Figure Theory*. Simile, metaphor, etc., are generally referred to as 'images' because they are intended to summon up especially vivid mental images of the things described. Hulme⁷ clearly thought that

poetry was a uniquely concrete and visual language because of its high density of such figures.

Frequently, several of the theories are held by one person. The meaning theory is an eighteenth-century commonplace,⁸ one consequence of which is that there is no particular problem about the evocative power of literature. Because of this, Burke never distinguishes properly between the aesthetic and meaning theories, and does not see that the second theory avoids many of his criticisms. Hulme, as stated above, holds both the aesthetic and figure theories, although once again the two come apart quite easily. For the purposes of this essay I shall assume that both the meaning theory and the figure theory are false. The first part of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* turned the first into a historical curiosity, and brief consideration of conceits, and the images in 'Prufrock' should disabuse us of the second. In addition, I shall assume that only a weak version of the aesthetic theory need be taken seriously. According to this, we should not expect an image to correspond to each word or to each completed thought (as the meaning theory usually demands), merely that images should form naturally and spontaneously at some point in our reading.

Given that adherence to even this weak version of the aesthetic theory is going to require the heroic step of declaring large tracts of *The Prelude* and *An Essay on Man* to be 'unpoetical', why should anyone be attracted to such a theory in the first place? I think the answer is four-fold.

First, there is the intuition generated by this question: 'If music appeals to the ear, and art, sculpture and dance to the eye, to which of our senses is literature addressed?' Of course, any work of literature can either be read or listened to, and a large element of our experience of drama will be straightforwardly perceptual, but few, I imagine, would wish to claim that enjoying a poem is equivalent to enjoying the *sound* of its words (a pleasure you can experience even—perhaps especially—in a language you cannot understand) or that enjoying a novel is the same as appreciating the *look* of its sentences. This is not to deny that the sound of a poem's words or the way they are set out on the page may be highly significant, but if our interest is focused on the meaning of the words (as surely it must be) then we seem to have lost contact with the perceptual object—Wittgenstein's arguments show that the meaning of a word is not any kind of object, inner or otherwise.

Second, the frequent intensity of our response to literature gives a reason for supporting the aesthetic theory. The fact that fiction makes people cry, or grow angry and agitated, is supported by more than introspective evidence. How is this intensity to be explained? A promising beginning is to observe that what is close, personal and immediate (like sense experience) has a much more profound and lasting effect on our emotional and affective systems than

what is distant, impersonal and abstract (like generalized propositional knowledge).

Third, it is possible to become so involved with a work that one can, while reading, find the fictional world to be as concrete, real and visual as the actual world; indeed, sometimes this experience is so intense that the two can almost be confused.⁹ (*Contra* Hulme, this experience seems more frequent with novels than with poetry.) While it seems impossible to confuse the word 'sea', or the abstract concept that the word expresses, with the sea itself, there are good experimental reasons for supposing that even faint, voluntarily induced images can be confused with actuality.¹⁰

The fourth reason, however, is the most important. For reasons to be explained below, the *Verstehen* view of literature requires the reader to form images of what he reads about, and it is also immensely attractive for at least the following reasons. Firstly, it explains how literature and the humanities in general can be centrally concerned with truth and knowledge and yet be complementary to, rather than in conflict with, science. Secondly, it explains why aesthetic knowledge is personal, non-transferable and incapable of being summed up in propositional form. Thirdly, it explains why the link between pleasure and literary knowledge is much more intimate than that between pleasure and scientific knowledge. Fourthly, it shows why literature is not simply a specialist pursuit nor a relaxation for the tired administrator, but provides a form of knowledge which is essential to us as human beings, irrespective of the kind of life we have chosen for ourselves.

Baldly, the *Verstehen* idea runs as follows. Science attempts to show how the world is in itself and not as it appears to any observer. Thus, its explanations do not mention secondary qualities, values or any other properties which might reasonably be thought to depend on the observer's constitution. Literature, however, is concerned not with inanimate objects (or objects treated as if they were inanimate) but with the experiences of conscious creatures who have a point of view on the world. The *Verstehen* technique requires that we construct a person's experience within our own minds in order to appreciate how the world seems from his point of view, and consequently to understand why he behaves as he does. This ability is strengthened and extended by exposure to great literature, because the writer's skill allows us to live—in imagination—through a variety of situations which we could not have imagined unaided. The knowledge that we derive from literature is not propositional information but knowledge of what some experience is like, and it is internally related to pleasure because the writer can only *prompt* us to have an experience, the experience itself must be the spontaneous product of our own imaginations. Because of these facts, literary knowledge cannot be summarized and passed on to another (he has to read the work himself), and it has a profound and lasting effect on our attitudes and emotions.

If we accept that literature gives knowledge by *Verstehen* then we can see that in reading a poem we need to reconstruct what the narrator perceived. To imagine seeing what someone or something looks like—your mother, for instance—is to have a visual image of that person or object.¹¹ The same applies to other sense modalities: to imagine what something sounds like is to have an auditory image, to imagine what something feels like is to have a tactile image, and so on. To put ourselves in someone's position, therefore, will require the formation of images. The idea of *Verstehen* thus provides some justification for the aesthetic theory of mental imagery although in an even weaker form than that hitherto considered. It makes it reasonable to expect poetry to evoke imagery when the things that it describes are of a kind which can be perceived or felt.

However, people do not just perceive and feel, they also *think*, and this may affect them just as profoundly, may induce emotional reactions which are just as deep-seated or violent, as anything seen or felt. Thus, to enter into somebody's experience (either an author's or one of his character's) we need to reconstruct not only what they perceived but also *what it was like to think what they thought*.¹² Imagery and abstract thought do not, therefore, stand in opposition to one another: if we stand back and consider the central theoretical rationale for the image theory we see that it also legitimizes the place of abstract thought in poetry.

Frege's 'The Thought'¹³ provides some clues as to the role and nature of abstract thought in poetry. This is not because of anything he says in his discussion of poetry in the opening pages—his reflections on the tone of 'steed' differing from that of 'horse' is a direct forbear of the unhelpful distinction between referential and emotive language—but because he draws a sharp demarcation between a *thought* and the psychological process of *thinking*. He drew this distinction for two reasons. Firstly, he wanted to avoid any suggestion that the laws of logic—if A then A, either A or not A, etc.—were dependent on the contingent facts of human psychology; and secondly, because he wanted to emphasize that thoughts, unlike images, are essentially public and sharable. For Frege, a thought is something immaterial, atemporal and abstract, and cannot therefore be any kind of object for the senses; but *thinking* is something which does take place over time and frequently has a very rich phenomenology. This distinction highlights an ambiguity in our ordinary use of 'thought': sometimes we use it to refer to a private *process*, as in 'he was lost in thought', and sometimes we use it to refer to the public, sharable *product* of the process, as in 'The Thought of Max Weber'. Philosophy and science I take to be primarily interested in thought in the second sense, whereas literature, because it is concerned with the entire subjective *Lebenswelt*, is primarily interested in reconstructing the whole psychology of the thinking process, approaching it from the point of view of narrative and the part it plays in the individual's biography. Not that this precludes either logic or the

abstract thought itself. Logic, of course, enters into the psychological process, and articulating a Fregean thought will be the natural product of that process.

I now want to test and clarify this idea against some concrete examples. I shall begin by quoting one of Philip Larkin's major poems in full, because it seems a superb example of how the experience of thought can be integrated into experience generally. I shall then isolate several features which explain, at least in part, its emotional impact. Around this paradigm I shall place four passages from other poets which successively lose one or more of these features. I do not aim to produce a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for the correct use of thought in poetry; rather, my concern is to understand why a certain kind of thought, and a certain manner of treating it, feels natural, and fitting and appropriate. There are greater poems than this one of Larkin's, but few I think which so effectively use all the resources of particularity and abstraction which are available to the poet.

Dockery and Son¹⁴

'Dockery was junior to you,
Wasn't he?' said the Dean. 'His son's here now.'
Death-suited, visitant, I nod 'And do
You keep in touch with —' Or remember how
Black-gowned, unbreakfasted, and still half-tight
We used to stand before that desk, to give
'Our version' of 'these incidents last night'?
I try the door of where I used to live.

Locked. The lawn spreads dazzlingly wide.
A known bell chimes. I catch my train, ignored.
Canal and clouds and colleges subside
Slowly from view But Dockery, good Lord,
Anyone up today must have been born
In '43, when I was twenty-one.
If he was younger, did he get this son
At nineteen, twenty? Was he that withdrawn

High-collared public-schoolboy, sharing rooms
With Cartwright who was killed? Well, it just shows
How much . . . How little . . . Yawning, I suppose
I fell asleep, waking at the fumes
And furnace-glares of Sheffield, where I changed,
And ate an awful pie, and walked along
The platform to its end to see the ranged
Joining and parting lines reflect a strong

Unhindered moon. To have no son, no wife,
No house or land still seemed quite natural.
Only a numbness registered the shock
Of finding out how much had gone of life,

How widely from the others. Dockery, now:
 Only nineteen, he must have taken stock
 Of what he wanted, and been capable
 Of. . . No, that's not the difference: rather, how

Convinced he was he should be added to!
 Why did he think adding meant increase?
 To me it was dilution. Where do these
 Innate assumptions come from? Not from what
 We think truest, or most want to do:
 Those warp tight-shut, like doors. They're more a style
 Our lives bring with them: habit for a while,
 Suddenly they harden into all we've got

And how we got it; looked back on, they rear
 Like sand-clouds thick and close, embodying
 For Dockery a son, for me nothing,
 Nothing with all a son's harsh patronage.
 Life is first boredom, then fear.
 Whether or not we use it, it goes,
 And leaves what something hidden from us chose,
 And age, and then the only end of age

Here we need to note five factors that typify the successful handling of thought in poetry. First, the poem presents us with a perfectly familiar and evocatively described series of events that everybody can imagine undergoing. It is a poem firmly rooted in concrete human experience, and when we respond to its force and sincerity, it is with a sense of *recognition*—'Yes, that's exactly how it would be'—rather than with a feeling of being informed.

Second, the central thought of the poem is *about* the particular experience we have lived through with the poet. The abstract idea stated in the last four lines of the poem is, to a certain extent, supported by the episode in the poet's life described in the earlier stanzas.

Third, and most importantly, the thought *develops*. The case of Dockery, introduced by the Dean in line one, is immediately submerged by further memories, conversations, the business of leaving Oxford; and only re-emerges again in the middle of stanza two. The exclamation ('good Lord') and the two unanswered questions suggest that it is only now that the Dean's words have begun to sink in, and their importance to be realized. But this line of thought, although initially animated, fails to develop, and gutters out into something vague and indefinite ('How much . . . How little . . .'). When the narrator wakes, however, his thoughts about Dockery have crystallized, and assert themselves in notably unhesitant syntax:

. . . To have no son, no wife,
 No house or land still seemed quite natural

Only a numbness registered the shock
 Of finding out how much had gone of life,
 How widely from the others . . .

The thought is still centred on himself, and it is only when we reach the final lines that Larkin risks the universal:

Life is first boredom, then fear
 Whether or not we use it, it goes,
 And leaves what something hidden from us chose,
 And age, and then the only end of age.

This thought has gradually emerged—at first haltingly but then with greater readiness and vigour—from a vague sense of dissatisfaction and the contemplation of his immediate surroundings. As Larkin becomes progressively more absorbed in his rapidly clarifying thought, so the final stanzas grow more abstract and less concerned with the external world; but even here it is the empirical-psychological processes rather than the normative-logical ones which predominate, and we follow him up at least one wrong turning, 'No, that's not the difference . . .'. In the main body of the poem, however, it is things seen, heard, experienced, which prompt his thoughts and mould their form and direction; and this mixture of perception and reflection would seem to be an accurate reflection of our inner life's content. But the same combination is not to be found in his later 'This Be The Verse',¹⁵ which also deals with the problem of inherited characteristics:

They fuck you up your mum and dad.
 They may not mean to but they do.
 And fill you with the faults they had
 And add some extra just for you.

To compare this with 'Dockery and Son' is to become conscious of the fact that whereas 'Dockery' allows us to *live through* something, 'This Be The Verse' merely *tells* us something. The dour twelve-line squib is a concluded thought versified, while the infinitely richer 'Dockery and Son' not only allows us to see and hear and feel, but charts the psychological process of thinking. It finally ends, as is natural, with the product of the process.

Fourth, the context in which he thinks not only prompts his thoughts but also symbolizes them: there is a sense in which the perceived events are just as much *about* his thoughts as his thoughts are about the events. To return to Oxford is to revisit a scene of his youth, and to revive within himself a sense of youthful freedom and possibility ('The lawn spreads dazzlingly wide') to which he cannot return ('I try the door of where I used to live: / Locked.'). Oxford is familiar, but he no longer belongs ('A known bell chimed. I catch

my train, ignored') and he repeats the journey north, the direction his life took on leaving the university. Compared to the earlier 'Canal and clouds and colleges' the reality he wakes to is harsh and unforgiving: '. . . the fumes / And furnace glares of Sheffield', the pie he eats is 'awful'. He pauses to reflect on his journey while he walks to the end of the platform, just as the poem itself is a moment of reflection on his life, and notices how the rails—those emblems of determinism, and in marked contrast to the dazzlingly wide lawn of stanza two—join and part, mirroring lives which have intersected briefly only to be pulled apart again. As if to throw the determining forces and constraints on human life into dramatic relief, the moon is 'unhindered'.¹⁶

This is not the place for a full-dress analysis of symbolism, but it is worth noting that no object has intrinsic symbolic value: it only means something *to somebody*. Sometimes the symbolic power of an object or set of events can be recognized by virtually anyone in any context; Freud's observation that 'Birth is symbolized by water . . . for dying we have setting out on a *journey* or *travelling* by train . . .'¹⁷ applies just as much to Larkin's poem as it does to the dreams of Freud's Viennese patients. More frequently, however, everyday objects such as pies, rails, lawns, only have a symbolic value to a particular person in a particular state of mind, as is the case with Larkin's narrator. In some cases, it is, of course, possible for a poet to convey his preoccupations to his readers by this method alone, and without explicitly stating his thoughts at all.

Fifth, the last four lines draw us into their mood of moving resignation. To a large extent, this is due to their position in the poem: had it begun with 'Life is first boredom then fear . . .' and carried on in a similar vein, then our perceptual imagination would be a blank and we would experience, as opposed to merely comprehend, nothing. However, the rhythm and diction of the verse also plays a significant role: the movement is halting and constrained, and lengthy pauses are demanded at the punctuation marks. It is a truism of practical criticism that the language of a poem should enact its sense, and that a good reading of even the most abstract poetic thought requires that the reader project himself into its mood and atmosphere, but I hope the wider theoretical context sketched above provides a perspicuous rationale for these claims.

The importance of linguistic texture can be demonstrated more clearly by looking at two passages from Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey'.¹⁸ Having described the scene, and given thanks for the morally beneficent influence recollection has had on him, he continues:

. . . Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime: that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight

5

Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened. . . .

In this extract, unlike in Larkin's poem, we are shown nothing of the narrator's circumstances and physical environment, and yet we are still able to share in the mood in which the thought was conceived, so it has an effect on our emotions as well as our intellect. This success can only be due to the way the linguistic structure parallels the feelings expressed. The cumbersome repetitions ('In which . . . / In which . . .', '*. . . the heavy and the weary weight*'¹⁹) clog the movement of the verse, and added emphasis is achieved by the alliteration of 'weary weight'. The metre requires us to grant 'unintelligible' its full six syllables in a line where all the other words have only one, and consequently we have the sense of prolonging the word, dragging ourselves through its apparently endless length. By contrast, the light feminine ending of 'Is lightened' echoes our feeling of ease and felicity, and life's burdens, which have taken twenty deliberately clumsy words to describe, evaporate in two. In a later passage, too, the sound and structure of the language acts as a physical analogue to its meaning:

. . . And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy-
Of elevated thoughts, a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods
And the mountains . . .

Rhythm plays an important part in the overall effect here. While it is quite possible, if slightly insensitive, to read the opening lines of the extract as a strict pentameter, the exercise becomes absurd as soon as we reach 'And the round ocean . . .'. At this point the rhythm takes on a bounding, exultant quality, so that a heavy emphasis comes on 'round', 'living', 'blue', 'mind', 'man', etc., and then falls with really extraordinary weight on 'rolls'—the rhetorical climax to which the whole sentence has been leading.

Some of the sweep of this passage is also to be explained by the repetition of 'and': '*And the round ocean, and the living air / And the blue sky, and in the mind of man*'. In conventional prose 'and' would normally signal the end of a list, but here, no sooner has Wordsworth thought to end it than some other facet of nature's multitudinousness occurs to him. The list is apparently endless, and Wordsworth's profligate way with connectives all adds to the

sense of amplitude and prodigality. This impression is strengthened by a similarly extravagant use of 'all': 'All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts / And rolls through all things.' The omnipresence of the 'a'-sound is also worth noting: seven consecutive lines in this section begin with it, and all the singular, elemental words—'man', 'and', 'am', 'all', 'a'—contain it. When this ubiquitous sound is coupled with the way every aspect of the universe is merged together with connectives and embraced by repeated 'all's, we have the impression that man, language and the universe are merging together in a paeon of ecstatic oneness.

Thought is less effectively handled in this passage from Pope's *An Essay on Man*:

Fortune her gifts may variously dispose,
And these be happy called, unhappy those;
But Heav'n just balance equal will appear,
While those are plac'd in Hope, and these in Fear:
Not present good or ill, the joy or curse
But future views of better, or of worse.²⁰

There seem to be two things wrong with this. Firstly, the abstract thoughts of Wordsworth and Larkin grew out of lived, immediate experience. This means that the reader both experienced the context in which the thought arose, and also saw it tested against, and supported by, the concrete. This passage, on the other hand, comes from a poem which consists of nothing but generalized, atemporal statement. However, this cannot be its sole fault since both the passages from Wordsworth (and also many other longer abstract passages in his writings, such as the 'spots of time' section in Book XI of *The Prelude*) can make their impact, even when read in isolation. The real problem is that in reading this passage we gain no sense at all of what it was like to think these thoughts.

The extracts from 'Tintern Abbey', because of the sensuousness of their language, succeeded in being living and personal as well as cogent, whereas the passage from Pope is bereft of emotional charge and impact. Pope *tells* us things and our task is exhausted when we comprehend; we are never invited inside the narrator's consciousness or given material to act as a cue to our own reconstruction of experience. The versification is neat, tepid and a little heartless—quite unsuitable, one would have thought, for a subject as traumatic as human fortune—and the language does not work with the sense to engage our emotions. The form of the poem does not grow out of the subject matter but is a piece of alien elegance imposed from the outside, so that (to employ a handy turn of phrase from Cavell) one has the impression that the passage is not so much *written as written up*²¹—as if Pope first allowed his thoughts to reach completion and then put them into metrical form. Pope has placed a Fregean thought before us—eminently public, sharable, debatable—but shorn

of the subjectivity which conceived it. The alchemy by which we are drawn into the thinking process of another is not achieved; nor is it attempted.

My final example is drawn from Sir Richard Blackmore's *Creation*, one of a vast mass of eighteenth-century verse—now largely unread—which celebrates all aspects of human expertise and knowledge. At this point, Blackmore is discussing the digestive system:

Nature has various tender muscles placed,
By which the artful gullet is embraced;
Some the long funnel's curious mouth extend,
Through which ingested meats with ease descend;
Other confederate pairs for nature's use
Contract the fibres, and the twitch produce,
Which gently pushes on the grateful food
To the wise stomach, by its hollow road.

The process is followed through for another forty lines until we reach:

Th'intestine spiral fibres these protrude,
And from the winding tubes at length exclude.²²

This, like Diaper on fish, Thompson and Dyer on agriculture, Philips on glass-blowing, Garth on medicine, Yalden on coal-mining and Moore on fen drainage, strikes us as ridiculous. Why? Well, like the extract from Pope, neither the context (which is very much the same kind of thing) nor the movement and diction of the verse gives any indication of mood or feeling. Above all, however, it is the grotesque incongruity between the elegant poetic surface and Blackmore's chosen subject matter that make this 'poem' risible. Although Pope gives us no concrete particulars, his generalities are at least based on what Wordsworth called 'the discipline of our daily life . . . the knowledge that all men carry about with them',²³ and to discover the correctness of what Pope says requires us only to reflect on possible or actual instances of lived experience. Had Pope set his lines amidst such dramatized instances of life, his lines' effectiveness would have been greatly enhanced. The oddity of Blackmore's poem can be ascribed to the fact that it has no connection whatsoever with *Verstehen*: it does not—in Leavis' words—invite us to 'feel into and become',²⁴ but only to *assent*, without a change of perspective. Accordingly, it displays three of the characteristics associated with propositional as opposed to experiential knowledge.

First, if you already know about the digestive system then it would be very hard to understand why you should wish to read the poem. If you did want to learn about the digestive system, and therefore read the poem and assimilated all it had to tell you, it would be equally difficult to motivate a second and third reading. On the other hand, even if you know the Lake District

thoroughly, you would still have every reason for reading Wordsworth, and having read some of his work once, to read it again. We do not read his poetry to discover geographical facts, but to share *his experience* of that landscape. Propositional knowledge is an all-or-nothing affair. You either know that the stomach digests food or you do not, whereas our experiential memories of sharing Wordsworth's experiences can be more or less intense, more or less vivid or faded, and a desire to relive them is readily comprehensible.

Second, and closely connected with the foregoing, if Wordsworth has discovered a pattern in experience which we have hitherto overlooked, then it will strike us with the force of recognition ('almost a remembrance,' said Keats²⁵) because all the materials for intellectual advance are already to hand. But the technical hints and information contained in Blackmore, Yalden, Diaper *et al.* go beyond our normal knowledge of life and do not strike us in this way. They do not re-order or point-up what we already know, but tell us something we did not know at all. At best we are *informed*, and if we are already in possession of this information then there is no point in reading them.

Third, experiential knowledge is always from a *point of view*. When we look at a picture, we stand in the same relation to pictured space as we imagine the artist stood to actual space.²⁶ In a novel we are told, 'She appeared at the window', implying that the narrative point of view was outside the building rather than in the room with her, or that 'When the others left, he remained at the table playing with the bread-crumbs on the cloth', implying that the point of view has stayed in the room rather than following the others out into the street. In such a context, we will assume that even long passages of abstract thought are from the narrator's viewpoint; the surrounding concrete experience having identified the locus of consciousness where the thinking takes place. This is not the case in contexts where only general proportional knowledge is presented. 'Water flows down hill', 'M. W. R. is less than six feet tall', 'food is digested in the stomach', are not simply reports of how things look or seem from the right-hand side of the room or *for me*, they are true for anybody anywhere.

Although Blackmore speaks of 'the gullet', he is not talking about some particular gullet which he sees in front of him, but of the normal functioning of all human gullets, hence the sense of abstraction we get from his poem, even though it appears to be about a perfectly specific and concrete process. This is what we would expect in a scientific work, since science attempts to *transcend* the individual viewpoint by couching its explanations in terms of primary qualities (size, shape, speed, etc.) that do not depend on the observer's psychology. It attempts to show not how things *seem* to someone's 'senses and passions',²⁷ but how they objectively *are*. One cannot have an image from everywhere or from nowhere, and consequently knowledge of this degree of generality has to be propositional in form. Although poetry is written in

propositions it does not *use* its propositions in the normal way, but to prompt and guide our own reconstructions of experience. As Wittgenstein says: 'Do not forget that a poem, even though it is composed in the language of information, is not used in the language-game of giving information.'²⁸ Propositions as general as Blackmore's cannot be realized into experiences, and therefore, even though they are in metrical form, they cannot function in the properly poetic manner. His work remains at the level of competent verse, ingenious but frigid and inert. As with medieval animal trials, we struggle to understand the motivation for writing these vast scientific poems, and the language-game for which they were intended remains obscure to us.

It is possible to imagine a good poem on a scientific or even mathematical topic but it would not approach its subject matter in Blackmore's manner. A genuinely moving poem on fen drainage would have to be about how it affected the lives of those who knew or lived on the fen: the sense of bewildering change, the different appearance of the countryside, the loss of wildlife—in other words, the impact such an event would have on the subjective *Lebenswelt*. Similarly, a good poem about glass-blowing could not just be a versified compendium of glass-blowing techniques. It could, however, find larger significances in the glitter and pellucid fragility of the material, or the chiaroscuro of the apparently miraculous processes by which glass is brought into being and fashioned. In fact, Jacobean plays, particularly those of John Webster, are full of striking images drawn from glass and glass-blowing.²⁹

In analysing the Larkin poem, I isolated five features which I took to be virtues in its poetic treatment of an abstract thought. These were (i) the thought grew out of a particular experiential context; (ii) to a large extent the thought was *about* that context, which also supported the general statement made at the end of the poem; (iii) the thought developed; (iv) the context symbolized the thought; (v) the language in which the final thought (and indeed the whole poem) was expressed enacted its sense. All of these features highlight the experiential nature of the thinking process which, for a logician like Frege, is simply an irrelevance when it is not being a positive nuisance. But a poet is not primarily concerned with proving something true or false, his aim is to allow us to know what some experience—including the experience of thinking—is *like*, and in this, Larkin seems to have been entirely successful. When we read his poem, because of its organic wholeness, we feel we have lived in imagination through an experience whose emotional impact is far greater than either a bare description of his journey or a Fregean presentation of his general conclusion could possibly be.

The experience our mind reconstructs when we read through the poem is, of course, an idealization. The poem is not a direct transcript of what passed through Larkin's head, but is a supremely artful construct that is designed to give that impression. This impression, however, is something that we want to avoid in scientific and philosophical writing. In a philosophical paper the

content is too propositional and abstract to establish an experiential point of view, and while it certainly has a writer, it does not have a *narrator*. Because of this, the subject matter need not be restricted to 'the discipline of our daily life', or record a number of connected events in temporal sequence—there is no sense in which the end of a philosophical paper is about something either later or earlier than the beginning. The lack of experiential content rules out symbolism, and if we have the impression that the ideas clarified and developed for the writer as he approached his conclusion, then that is a sign that he should have gone back and rewritten the whole paper. Lastly, and obviously, the quality of a philosophical essay depends on the quality of the thoughts it contains, and these can be assessed from an accurate paraphrase. But the quality of a poem is not solely dependent on the quality of its thought, if only because its language is one of the most vital cues the reader has in reconstructing the emotion in which the thought is embedded. Someone who has only read an accurate paraphrase of 'Tintern Abbey' is not in a position to evaluate the poem. In literature, of course, the language as well as the thought it expresses, is part of the work to be assessed.

From this examination I conclude that abstract thought is a legitimate topic for poetry, but the whole manner of approach must be utterly different from that of the philosopher or logician.

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- ⁸ See, for example, Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, L. A. Selby-Bigge (ed.), revised P. H. Niddich (Oxford, 1978), p. 1.
- ⁹ See Richard Church, *Over the Bridge* (London, 1956), p. 78, for a particularly good account of such an experience.
- ¹⁰ Some experimental findings are contained in C. W. Perky, 'An Experimental Study of Imagination', *American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 21 (1910).
- ¹¹ This point is made by R. Scruton, *Art and Imagination* (London, 1974), p. 100.
- ¹² The fact that a thought in a poem will be expressed in words does not imply that the original thought was in words (although it might have been). A descriptive passage should give the reader a sense of perception, but here there is clearly no implication that perception is verbal. In addition, the phrase, 'the original thought' should not be taken necessarily to suggest something autobiographical—the experience recorded could be entirely fictional.

- ¹³ Translated by A. M. and M. Quanton as 'The Thought: A Logical Inquiry', in P. F. Strawson (ed.) *Philosophical Logic*, Oxford Readings in Philosophy (Oxford, 1973)
- ¹⁴ Larkin, *Collected Poems*, A. Thwaite (ed.) (London, 1988), pp. 152-3. I would like to thank Anthony Thwaite for granting permission to reprint this poem.
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- ²¹ S. Cavell, 'The Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy', in *Must We Mean What We Say?* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 70
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- ²⁶ The point is made by John Searle in 'Las Meninas and Representation', in W. J. T. Mitchell (ed.) *The Language of Images* (Chicago, 1980), p. 251
- ²⁷ Wordsworth, 'Essay, Supplementary to the Preface (1815)', in Gill, *op. cit.*, p. 641.
- ²⁸ L. Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford, 1967), section 160, p. 28c.
- ²⁹ See Roy Booth, 'John Webster's Heart of Glass', *English* Vol. 40 (1991), pp. 97-113.

CONDUCTING AND MUSICAL INTERPRETATION

Stephanie A. Ross and Jennifer Judkins

'The Los Angeles Philharmonic, a symphonic ensemble usually able to follow anyone through anything, on this occasion produced alternating moments of clarified and virtuosic music making and just plain instrumental slovenliness. Those familiar with the orchestra would have to credit the podium guest for both kinds of moments.' Daniel Cariaga, reviewing Yuri Temirkanov conducting at the Hollywood Bowl (*Los Angeles Times*, 24 July 1993).

I INTRODUCTION

WE ARE accustomed to thinking that conductors 'lead' musicians and 'produce' interpretations. Most music critics hold conductors responsible for interpretation and assess their skills on this basis. Certainly, conductors determine the tempos and the dynamics of musical works; their gestures also mark the beginnings and ends of those works and movements. Conductors' control over other aspects of interpretation is less clear. Are balance, style, and character imposed on the ensemble by the conductor? If so, how, and to what degree? Are there aspects of interpretation communicated exclusively in rehearsal; i.e. which cannot be embodied in the physical motions of conducting? Interestingly, most small ensembles (string quartets, madrigal groups) are able to perform without a conductor; in fact, a conductorless status is highly valued by an ensemble. Many musicians will argue that whenever possible a group should not be conducted. Why not?

Two difficulties quickly emerge. First, conductors cannot, no matter what their stature, concertize on their own. Therefore, any discussion of what they do must necessarily delve into the 'closed' world of performing musicians. Second, once on stage, gesture and facial expression become the conductor's sole means of communication with the ensemble. However, the importance of gesture in live performance remains largely unremarked in musical aesthetics.

In this paper, we will examine what conductors contribute to musical life; i.e. 'what exactly do conductors do?' and 'does it need doing?' In particular, we will consider whether interpretations are the kinds of things that conductors can impose. We will note some of the factors commonly cited when interpretations are individuated and assessed and ask how many of these lie

within a conductor's control in rehearsal and performance. In addition to asking what aspects of interpretation the musicians themselves contribute, we will briefly explore some new territory: the physicality of musical performance and its cohesiveness with the gestures of conducting. To sharpen our discussion, we will borrow Jerrold Levinson's distinction between critical and performative interpretations, yet speculate that a less rigid separation between these two may be more reflective of musical practice, especially for a conducted ensemble. Overall, we will conclude that the notion of musical interpretation is not univocal. Interpretation in musical performance is achieved quite differently by a single musician, by a conductorless ensemble, and by a traditionally led symphony orchestra.

II QUALIFICATIONS

We have placed some limitations on this endeavour. We will only address modern conducting practice; we will not engage in debates about historically authentic performance practice. Yet any discussion of musical interpretation presumes some notion of the identity of the musical work in question. It seems a definitional truth that no acceptable interpretation can alter a piece so substantially that it is no longer the same work. For instance, radically changing the instrumentation of a given piece might result in a transcription rather than a new interpretation; consider Stravinsky's 'Rite of Spring' performed by an accordion band. We intend our discussion of interpretation to remain neutral among competing theories of work identity. Claims we make about interpretation apply to particular musical works however they are identified and individuated. Finally, we do not believe that interpretation is the sort of thing such that for each musical work there exists one ideal interpretation—complete, correct, and convincing. Michael Krausz defends a multiplist view of musical interpretation in his article 'Rightness and Reasons in Musical Interpretation', arguing that interpretations are underdetermined by scores and that the extra-score considerations required for adequate interpretation are themselves historically and socially conditioned and therefore multiple.¹ In what follows, when we speak of interpretations of musical works, we are referring to the set of plausible interpretations.² And for most works, this set will contain more than one member.

III INTENTION AND INTERPRETATION

"The mere mention of the word "intention" in regard to any art-critical or art-theoretical question is liable to elicit, these days, the most violent reaction, as if one had just dropped a snake in a crowded room.' Peter Kivy, *The Fine Art of Repetition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 121

Intentions are indeed comfortable old clothes for musicians and conductors. In fact, the urge to honour composers' intentions is so strong that musicians

(and conductors) will often honour them over almost all considerations of musical aesthetics, unless the musical price is too high.³ In the contemporary musical world, most musicians and conductors have had many opportunities to work closely with composers in rehearsal. The composer's wishes as notated or verbally expressed are law. As Robert Martin has claimed, the score is at the heart of the performer's (and conductor's) practice.⁴ No matter what the musicians may think of the composer's skill, all attempts will be made to realize the work as notated, with two possible exceptions: if it is 'unplayable' (note how that verdict has changed over the course of music's history), or if performing it would damage the instrument (not as uncommon as might be thought). The philosophical arguments regarding any fallacies of intention are quite surprising to practising musicians.

The Intentional Fallacy as formulated by Wimsatt and Beardsley is no longer in philosophical fashion. We now think that information of the sort these two writers labelled 'external'—information about artists and their lives, works and their production—can often be relevant to the interpretation of art. But one remnant of Wimsatt and Beardsley's view lingers on. While we admit that artists' beliefs and intentions are relevant to the interpretation of their works, we do not *privilege* those intentions. That is, we do not claim that the meaning of a given work is whatever its artist intended in creating it. Such an approach would be too limiting, since the artist may have failed to achieve her intentions, or may have unknowingly created a work with a certain significance. Also, works of art are re-interpreted by succeeding generations. The stated intentions of an artist from an earlier period may no longer gibe with what audiences today find in the work. Note that this approach is consonant with the multiplist point of view defended in section II. If one did privilege composers' intentions, then there would be one ideal interpretation of each work, namely whichever interpretation best reconstructed and realized those intentions. Instead, we accept Krausz's claim that for each work there will almost always be alternative interpretations underdetermined by the score.

While musical interpretation is not to be arrived at by simply reconstructing the composers' intentions, there remains one crucial connection between interpretation and intention. That is, that interpretation itself is what philosophers call an 'intentional' concept. In music, interpretation involves some understanding or construal of a piece, a claim about its structure and significance and about how it should be played. Factors commonly cited include the following: tempos, dynamics, balance, instrumentation, articulation of phrases and motifs, ornamentation, the 'salience' (backgrounding and foregrounding) and the interrelation of musical lines, feelings and emotions expressed, and aesthetic and representational qualities conveyed. Musical interpretations are the sorts of things that are disputed and defended, and this requires that they be consciously held. One adopts them knowingly and defends them with

reasons. One cannot unknowingly arrive at an interpretation (although one can unknowingly arrive at—i.e. deliver—a performance).⁵

IV WHAT MAKES UP AN INTERPRETATION?

'The breathtaking performance of Brahms's Second at the end of Thursday night's concert taught listeners, if anything, that brilliant sonority and thrilling urgency are only part of music's expressive repertory, and not necessarily the most important ones. Indeed, the true luxury of this playing had not to do with sound, but with time. Mr Sawallisch creates leisure without languor, a reflective calm that nevertheless quivers with energy.' Bernard Holland reviewing a performance by the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Wolfgang Sawallisch at Carnegie Hall (*New York Times*, 25 September 1993).

Jerrold Levinson's recent work on musical interpretation offers a useful taxonomy. In the article 'Performative vs. Critical Interpretation in Music', Levinson distinguishes two sorts of interpretation, critical interpretation (CI) and performative interpretation (PI). These differ in kind. The first is a theory about a piece of music, an account of the work's structure, qualities, and meaning. The second is, literally, a maximally specific sound sequence, the actual set of sounds generated in a considered performance of the piece. As Levinson notes, '... a CI is an interrelated set of remarks, a PI is a type of performance.'⁶

Levinson's crucial claim about CIs and PIs is that the relation between them is not one-to-one. 'There is generally a range of CIs compatible with a given PI... [F]rom a listener's perspective there can be no principled way to choose among them, no way of assigning to a PI a definite correlative CI' (p. 44). Thus, the relation between CIs and PIs can be many-to-one; quite different CIs (theories about the work) can yield the same PI (set of sounds). It follows that we are never warranted, when we hear a performance, in inferring that the artist(s) or conductor holds a particular conception of the piece (CI). What about the opposite situation? Can a single CI generate different PIs? It is tempting to argue against this possibility by claiming that (1) any given CI fixes those musical choices not fully specified by the score, and so (2) together the CI *and* the score determine a single PI. (This, of course, assumes that the performances are reasonably accurate.) Levinson does not, however, endorse this line of argument. He says that when different artists hold the same CI, they can nevertheless produce different PIs. (Much turns here on how we identify and individuate CIs and on when two people are said to have the same CI.)⁷

There are two more refinements to Levinson's view. First, he notes that a PI is not always associated with some CI or other; there can be cases where

there is no underlying CI there to express (p. 41). And second, in parallel fashion, Levinson allows that there can be cases where a performance does not 'contain' or convey a PI at all. The three examples he cites for this type of case are (i) performing by rote, (ii) performing an unfamiliar piece in a crunch, and (iii) performing by slavish or unreflective imitation (p. 47). Overall, then, Levinson endorses a 'hierarchy' of intentionality. He takes even *performance* to be an intentional notion, saying it must have been produced as an attempt to instantiate the sound structure of a work (p. 46); a PI involves a higher order of thought, since for Levinson it 'must at least represent a set of choices to play a certain way with some awareness of . . . the alternatives available' (p. 46); and, finally, a CI is a full-blown conception of a work.⁸

Where does a conductor fit in Levinson's scheme? Compare three musical situations: a pianist preparing a solo piece for recital; a string quartet rehearsing a major work in their repertoire; an orchestra beginning a series of rehearsals with a guest conductor. Presumably, in each case the musicians attempt to arrive at an understanding of the piece they are about to play. This understanding will guide their choices regarding the musical values listed above—tempos, dynamics, balance, articulation, and so on—most of which are not fully specified by the score. It is tempting to assume that the procedure is similar in each case, except that the decision is unilateral in case one, collective in case two (though not necessarily democratic), and both unilateral and autocratically imposed in case three. The assumption in this last case is that each player brings to rehearsal an individual PI; the conductor brings a well-considered CI and elicits a collective PI based upon it, by articulating corrections in rehearsal and by physical embodiment in performance; the skirmish usually ends in compromise. Let's see if this supposition is borne out.

V WHAT DO CONDUCTORS DO?

'“I feel like I'm driving a Rolls-Royce,” he said “I just push the pedal and steer.”’ Boston Symphony Orchestra conductor Seiji Ozawa quoted in a 10 October 1993 *New York Times* article by Anthony Tommasini assessing Ozawa's twenty years with the orchestra.

The same article which quoted Ozawa's comparison between conducting and driving diagnosed that conductor's failings as follows: 'When an Ozawa performance is unsuccessful, and many are, it is usually not that the playing is poor, and certainly not that it is too dangerous. To the contrary, it is likely to be accomplished but perfunctory, played as if out of obligation; be the work a Beethoven symphony or a Boston première. The suspicion that the chemistry between Mr Ozawa and his players is sometimes off is fueled by the notable success of certain guest conductors in recent seasons.' Let us jump back to actual musical practice to better understand this 'chemistry', the volat-

the intersection of autocratic versus collective, explicit versus tacit, musical interpretation. Then we will return to CIs and PIs and attempt to flex Levinson's categories to accommodate some problems presented by conducted ensembles.

Before the nineteenth century, most conductors were simply Kappelmeisters using non-standardized batons or just rolls of paper to beat time and signal entrances, little more. Today, the conductor's status is rarefied, with salaries in excess of any individual musician on stage (with the exception of some guest artists). A practice that began as mere time-beating had, by the nineteenth century, evolved to the point where 'Every beat, it was decreed, must also be an aesthetically significant gesture.'⁹ Some conductors are known for insightful illuminating interpretations (Carlo Maria Giulini); others for eccentric, even wrong-headed readings (Leopold Stokowski). The modern conductor has also attracted criticism. These larger-than-life figures, sometimes flamboyant (Leonard Bernstein), sometimes dictatorial (George Szell), are dismissed by Stravinsky as 'contiguous to music without always being of it'. Stravinsky also commented that a pandering public accords the conductor 'a position out of all proportion to his real value in the music, as distinguished from the music-business, community'.¹⁰ (And it was also Stravinsky who wrote in his book *Themes and Conclusions* that 'Conductors are still the lap-dogs of musical life. . .'.)

Conducting is one of our few outward expressions of musical literacy, which is usually tacit, non-discursive, and not necessarily exhibitable. In performance, interpretation is communicated to the musicians solely through the conductor's physical gesture. Philosophers have difficulty in dealing with gesture as it is enacted on stage, especially within a musical performance. Action theorists can identify a vast array of 'basic' actions, but this does little to illuminate how conductors use these gestures to elicit particular sounds from an orchestra. Compounding the problem is the well-known reticence on the part of musicians to talk about music: 'Don't say it, play it.'

Conductors present a visual pace and a characterization to the musicians, who are themselves using physical gesture to produce and characterize tones. Levinson has pointed out that rhythmic figures particularly derive expression from association with human movement, and emotions can be embodied in gesture and stance.¹¹ Loud frenetic playing requires large abrupt motions, and soft, languid playing requires small smooth motions. Yet these gestures are peculiarly evidenced to the live audience, viewing from behind the conductor. While the smallest indications may be invisible, all larger cues are telegraphed and the interpretation is often foreshadowed to the concert-goer.

Conducting as physical gesture is particularly coherent with what musicians are attempting with their instruments or voices. The physicality of musical performance is often slighted, but for the musician it is bound inextricably with making music.¹² Thus, downbeats are down because there is a cohes-

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iveness among exhaling, bowing strings, striking surfaces, and the conductor's downward hand motions. All involve the expenditure of energy. Similarly with upbeats: there is a cohesiveness amongst preparation and anticipation, inhaled breath, raised bows and mallets, and the conductor's rising hands. All build tension, in anticipation of its release.

Of course, during rehearsal words can supplement gestures. Conductors can explicitly request the nuances and effects they want the musicians to produce; further, they can motivate these requests by explaining why they believe the piece demands this treatment—explicating their CI. Suppose, to take a specific example, that a conductor rehearsing Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony claimed that certain passages played by the horns and strings in the third movement represent a dialogue between two musical personae (one gloomy and depressed, the other naively cheerful), that the melody first introduced by the horns is resolute and visionary, and that the harmonic changes wrung on these lines amounts to an expression of hope.¹³ While conductors rarely offer highly theoretical musicological disquisitions—'Note that in your part the German sixth chord resolves to the V on the third eighth note. . . '—they often characterize musical lines and exchanges in terms of pictures, emotions, and personifications. Yet such accounts do not seem the best way to elicit a desired set of sounds—a PI—from a group of musicians. And this is because musicians already come to rehearsal with a considerable understanding of the works at hand.

VI WHAT DO MUSICIANS CONTRIBUTE?

'Kahane led most of his Baroque program from the keyboard, honoring his colleagues by offering minimal coaxing to do what they accomplish surpassingly well without a conductor.' Herbert Glass reviewing a concert by the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra conducted by Jeffrey Kahane (*Los Angeles Times*, 13 November 1993).

Obviously, musicians provide the most basic element of any performance—the musical sound. That is, their ability to play their instruments allows them to provide the tones, timbres, and techniques mandated by the score. But this is to say only that the musicians provide the raw material for the performance of a musical work. Do they also make distinctive interpretive contributions? At what level?—only in the smallest ornaments (the 'granular' level¹⁴), or only in the largest sense of, say, overall tone quality and intonation? One answer to what they might provide lies in the notion of ensemble.

Ensemble playing is a goal of professional musicians. Few skills are as highly valued as being a good ensemble player, which carries two implications: (i) the player can blend and balance with fellow musicians without comment, and at the same time (ii) the player is responsive to the conductor's interpretative wishes conveyed through language and gesture. Good ensemble playing

provides the finesse in any group, whether or not it is conducted. Yet some of the filigree achieved in interpretation by a small, conductorless ensemble is not possible in a large symphony orchestra. In an unconducted group, every musician acts as an interpreter, an interactive participant heightening and sustaining musical materials, rather than acting as conduit for a (gestured) interpretation silently sent forth from the podium. This is why conductorless ensembles are more valued by musicians.

Many musicians would claim that the score as performed by an ensemble is not a *tabula rasa* onto which the conductor applies her interpretation. Although the conductor is allowed and encouraged to make the kind of open decisions demanded by the score, an interpretation is already in place. On this view, musicians do not play their parts note by note yet somehow happen to reflect the larger harmonic and musical structure. Instead, they are aware of characteristic features of each musical work—the predictability of phrasing, texture, and form. The philosopher Robert Nozick offered a definition of meaningful work in his book *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. The definition demanded that workers understand the place of their own activity in a larger goal-orientated scheme. Interestingly, Nozick used the example of a symphony orchestra to show that hierarchical organization is not, in and of itself, an impediment to meaningful work. The integrative, overarching understanding of one's actions that Nozick describes—an understanding that situates those actions in a larger context—is an essential ingredient in ensemble playing. The conductor must sometimes bring it about that her own ideas displace what the musicians are already doing. This is often a source of friction, each side believing its own interpretation more true to the work.

Since the nature of interpretation is precisely what is at issue here, we are not yet in any position to resolve this debate. That is, we are not yet prepared to declare that ensemble playing of the sort just described 'contains' or conveys interpretation. We will, however, propose one alternative account of the nature of ensemble. It may well be that instrumental ensemble does not constitute a competing, or even a preliminary, interpretation which the conductor must overcome, but rather that ensemble is simply responsive to particular musical styles. On this view, good ensemble playing captures differences in what Richard Wollheim calls general and individual style.¹⁵ Accomplished musicians know how to play their parts in works by composers as varied as Haydn and Brahms, Poulenc and Mahler. This means not only playing the correct notes at the proper times, but playing them with the proper inflections—knowing how and when to employ different tunings, different equipment (mutes, mallets, bows, and the like), different ornaments and articulations, different ranges of volume, and different degrees of strictness of tempo.

If this proposal is correct, nothing follows about interpretation and ensemble because alternative interpretations of a piece remain possible within a given stylistic framework. Of course, if an ensemble rehearses on its own

before the conductor comes in to prepare for a performance, it might be that an interpretation is already in place. But this case would then fall within the category of interpretations arrived at collectively by conductorless ensembles. When a conductor comes in for a first rehearsal and the musicians have *not* worked on the piece collectively beforehand, the players' basic level of musicianship may well guarantee that many musical decisions and choices are made automatically and appropriately. But this is not to say that the piece is thereby interpreted. (Recall our claim above about the intentionality of interpretation.) In fact, the conductor may be able to choose from among *competing* interpretations, none of which alters or displaces what the musicians are already doing.

VII PIs AND CIs

So when does interpretation enter in? To sharpen our discussion, let us return to Levinson's distinctions. Using the language of CI and PI, we can restate some of our claims about ensembles and conducted works. The unreflective view about the power of conductors seems to be this: conductors have a CI of any musical work they conduct, and good conductors generate performances in which the musicians they lead come to share that CI and to produce a performance that accords with it. This unreflective view has a flip side; it not only flatters conductors but it maligns musicians, assuming that that they bring to their playing neither a CI *nor* a PI. Unconducted ensembles, it is assumed, produce performances, and they might, with sufficient discussion, produce performances which embody a PI, but it is highly unlikely that they create their music by first collectively arriving at a shared CI and then playing in such a way as to implement that conception.

What we have already said about conducting and about ensemble calls into question both sides of this unreflective view. Suppose we specified more carefully conditions for the individuation and attribution of CIs. For example, we could stipulate that CIs should close every musical decision left open by the score, and that every difference in such decisions should make for a different CI. Certainly there is no reason to think that a conductor's gestures during a live performance convey a CI of this sort to each and every one of the musicians she leads. Nor is there much more reason to think that a conductor's gestures *and remarks* during rehearsal could accomplish this end. So even granting that we know that it is for the conductor to have a CI of the work, questions remain concerning its transmission to the musicians she conducts.

Turn now to the players in a conducted ensemble. If we reject the claim that they are typically engaged in realizing a shared CI, there remains the possibility that a similar conclusion holds one level down in Levinson's intentional hierarchy. That is, the musicians through their performance generate a shared PI. Yet what might such a claim actually mean? While we have granted that a PI is an intentional notion—it is a conception of how a piece ought to be played, evinced through the playing—do the musicians, while playing their

individual parts, have a PI of the whole? Since a PI is, for Levinson, a variety of considered *performance*, it is not clear that the PI for the horn and string players in the Shostakovich symphony discussed above concerns anything other than their own parts. They do not, after all, *play* the flute or timpani parts; do they, none the less, have a sense of how those parts should be played? And if they do indeed have views about the importance, articulation, emotive content, etc., of those parts, should this not be part of their CI, their theoretical take on the piece as a whole? And, finally, if a PI is, ultimately, a particular specific sound-sequence type, in what sense can the players or their conductor be said to possess that PI in advance of producing it?

Note that this line of argument calls into question the stark segregation between PI and CI. Granted, these varieties of interpretation are different in kind, but both are subject to discussion, contestation, and defence. Levinson did, after all, define a PI as a *considered* way of playing.¹⁶ Any PI that merits attention can be supported and sustained by appeal to claims that would form part of a CI for that same work. Moreover, the notion that CIs and PIs are themselves subject to discussion and debate suggests that here, too, we find further hierarchy. Some CIs are better than others—they more adequately explain the features of the work—and so are some PIs. And while PIs themselves are not the sorts of things that contain reasons, they can be defended by reasons, and presumably the better defences will be those that appeal to the better CIs. So the instrumentalists awaiting the conductor for a first rehearsal might well hold a view of their particular parts and of the work as a whole that will generate a specific PI. When might this be the case—and under what circumstances would the PI be attributable to the entire group?

VIII PUZZLE CASES

In the previous section, we first formulated and then attacked a 'received view' about conducting and interpretation. A number of puzzle cases that arise from that discussion will help us sort our claims about musical interpretation. They concern partial interpretation, changing interpretation, and unintended interpretation.

PUZZLE I

Must an interpretation be of an entire musical work, or can there be partial interpretation? If the latter, where might the divisions lie? Consider the sort of PI that might be possessed by a symphonic player. Surely she would have a view about how her own part should go, but she might also, as the frame or context for this understanding, have a view about how other parts should go as well—those that accompany or underlie hers, those that serve as counterpoint, those that repeat or develop or prepare for the melodic or harmonic material her part introduces, those that establish the tonal, harmonic, or emo-

tional frame, and so on. We can see here that a PI, when thought through and justified, begins to require a sustaining CI.

It seems less likely that a conductor would have a partial PI of a work. After all, what would make sense here? 'I've figured out the first theme, but not the development section.' 'I understand the piece melodically, but its harmonic structure evades me.' 'I see the formal relations in the work, but not its emotional content.' Such confessions would simply indicate an under-prepared, or incompetent, musician. For conductors, the interesting questions instead concern *changing* interpretations.

PUZZLE 2

If a conductor leads three successive performances of a piece—Friday and Saturday evenings and a Sunday matinée—or performs a work during one engagement and then conducts the same piece with a different orchestra several months later—how much would have to change before we acknowledged a different PI? Certainly, the second case could involve halls with noticeably different acoustics and musicians with noticeably different levels of talent. And common sense tells us that even in the first case, the judgement 'same PI' cannot require anything so strict as 'same set of sounds'. After all, musicians can have bad nights—miss entrances, fracture high notes, blur rhythms—and so a conductor can fail to elicit the set of sounds (PI) she seeks even when the musicians understand her goals and are trying to comply.¹⁷ Thus, our difficulties in identifying a conductor's PI in advance of a performance are multiplied after multiple performances.

PUZZLE 3

How are we to judge performances that do not conform to conductors' intentions and expectations? Can conductors generate unintended interpretations? Given all that we have said about the physicality of conducting, it seems that conductors could easily elicit undesired musical responses through incomplete, absent, or micro-managed gestures (overconducting). One of the most likely effects here could be an unintended change in the overall emotional tone of a piece. Emotions are, after all, expressed in behaviour. A conductor who had just quarrelled with a loved one might well conduct with more tense, anxious gestures than usual; a depressed conductor might conduct with small and enervated gestures. Either situation could yield a performance with a noticeably different emotional cast. Would we recognize, then, a new but unintended PI? Or should this turn on whether or not the conductor repudiated the performance after the fact?

We believe these puzzle cases illuminate a crucial difference in the way that PIs and CIs apply to performers (musicians), on the one hand, and to the conductors purportedly leading them, on the other. For musicians, Levinson's disjuncts stay disparate. CIs are theoretical accounts of musical works; PIs are

sound structures produced by playing. But we have argued that musicians would usually be able to defend their PIs by appeal to a theoretical understanding not only of their own parts but of the work as a whole. For conductors, CIs are beliefs about how a piece should sound; PIs are sound structures produced by conducting. The point is, for neither type of interpretation do conductors play instruments. They make music at one remove—by gesturing at musicians who *then* produce sounds by playing. The musicians' skills and choices are never entirely negated. Yet we hold only the leaders of conducted ensembles responsible for interpretations.

XI CONCLUSION

We conclude that the concept of interpretation is not univocal. It applies differently to musicians playing solo works, musicians playing in unconducted ensembles, and musicians led by a conductor. The disanalogies among these cases emerge when we think about the physicality of playing an instrument, on the one hand, and the intentionality of understanding music, on the other. Musicians play instruments, and they do so using their bodies—their motions, weight, and breath. A learned instrumental technique mediates between their gestures and the sounds they produce. But we must not forget the possible resistance and recalcitrance their instruments present. A musician might have a CI yet be unable to realize it due to a failure of technique or a defective instrument.

Conductors conducting musicians are not eliciting music from a 'human' or 'collective' instrument in anything like a similar fashion. That is, the recalcitrance presented by physical instruments and the demands of technique is quite different from the recalcitrance of musicians who cannot, or will not, produce the collective sounds the conductor seeks. A musician possessed of a CI and trying to realize it through playing succeeds if his technique subdues his instrument. For conductors, there is a wider gap between knowing and doing, between theoretical knowledge of a piece (CI) and the performance that results (PI). A conductor possessed of a CI and trying to realize it through conducting succeeds if her words and gestures elicit the desired sounds from the musicians playing their instruments or singing. This does not require that the musicians come to share that CI; it does not even require that they endorse the PI in its intentional guise (i.e. that they were attempting to make just those musical choices that the conductor sought to bring about). The resultant PI (the interpretation we hear) is an amalgam—the conductor's overarching critical interpretation winnowed through professional musicians.

In sum, with *unconducted* ensembles, no one individual stands as the 'locus' of interpretation. A shared PI emerges only if each individual's musical choices are knowingly made against the context of a larger musical view. With conducted ensembles, the group can create a performance that accords with the conductor's CI, but a variety of factors can bring it about that the conductor's

intentions are not fully communicated in rehearsal or performance, or not fully realized by the musicians.¹⁸ This need not indicate a failed performance; it could simply be one in which the musicians find inspiration elsewhere, perhaps even from one another. In such cases, we should question the received view according to which the conductor imposes an interpretation on the ensemble. The 'ideal PI' is a fluid concept, altered sometimes through the explicit revision of a CI, but more often regenerated through the insights, serendipities, and contingencies of performance.

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- ¹ Michael Krausz, 'Rightness and Reasons in Musical Interpretation', in Michael Krausz (ed.) *The Interpretation of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 75, 78, 80.
- ² It would be hard to specify just what makes an interpretation plausible, but consider some facts which might count against an interpretation: it rests on false claims about extra-musical matters/historical matters or contemporary musical practice; it obscures important aspects of the work's structure; it disregards or distorts the work's emotional or representational content; it makes the work unenjoyable or unenlightening.
- ³ Peter Kivy, *The Fine Art of Repetition* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1993), pp. 95 ff.
- ⁴ Robert Martin, 'Musical Works in the World of Performers and Listeners', in Krausz (ed.) *The Interpretation of Music*, p. 120.
- ⁵ Of course, interpretations can be defended with varying degrees of articulateness. The champion of an interpretation who declares 'I don't know, it just sounds right to me this way' has not done a very good job. The interpretation itself may be stunning and original, one that someone else could justify persuasively. The player or conductor who generates a performance may not be the best advocate for the interpretation embodied in that performance, but in order to claim to have an interpretation of the work at all, he or she must have made certain musical choices for specific reasons.
- ⁶ Jerrold Levinson, 'Performative vs. Critical Interpretation in Music', in Krausz (ed.) *The Interpretation of Music*, p. 38. Subsequent quotations from this work will be acknowledged parenthetically in the text.
- ⁷ This point is made in a discussion contrasting recitals and lecture-recitals. Levinson claims that the latter get the audience 'to understand why (CI) the pianist made the choices (PI) he did, while remaining aware that other CIs might have led to an identical PI, and that the same CI might have been realized or activated differently by another pianist, resulting in a different PI' (p. 44). Clearly, in this case one CI generates different PIs.
- ⁸ Consider in this regard a rhetorical question that Levinson poses about the Juilliard String Quartet: 'Is it plausible to think that, say, the Juilliard Quartet's reading of Beethoven's C sharp minor Quartet automatically embodies a critical conception of the work shared equally by all quartet members?' (p. 44). There may be a middle ground here, since the quartet members may have discussed and rehearsed their way to a shared critical conception.
- ⁹ Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of*

Musical Works (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 235

- ¹⁰ Igor Stravinsky, *Themes and Conclusions* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), pp. 132, 223

- ¹¹ Jerrold Levinson, 'Musical Literacy', *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Spring 1990), pp. 22-3.

- ¹² As an analogy, consider the familiar movie sound effect of footsteps on gravel. Without any visual cue, we 'hear' the act of walking—we may even visualize walking. Musicians, upon hearing music, especially the sound of their own instrument, intrinsically visualize or 'feel' the act of playing those sounds.

- ¹³ This sketch is adapted from the paper 'Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony and the Musical Expression of Cognitively Complex Emotions' by Gregory Karl and Jenefer Robinson, circulated in typescript. Here are a few claims the authors make about this symphony. 'The plot archetype to which Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony conforms is conventionally interpreted as a progression from dark to light or struggle to victory' (p. 7), 'The listener is rewarded for enduring the darkness and difficulty of what has preceded when the anticipatory H gives way to T1, the first serene passage in the entire work. The listener feels enormous relief. The effect is . . . to allow the listener to relax and to hope that the cheerful strain in T1b is a promise of more cheerfulness to come' (p. 9).

- ¹⁴ We owe this phrase to Stan Godlovitch.

- ¹⁵ Wollheim developed this distinction in his essay 'Pictorial Style: Two Views'. The distinction addressed the art of painting, and Wollheim warned against extending it to

other arts. Various philosophers, however, have profitably ignored this warning. For example, see Jenefer Robinson's paper 'General and Individual Style in Literature', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (1984).

- ¹⁶ While Levinson entertained the possibility of *idiot joueurs*, musicians who could play marvellously—'just get it right'—but could not defend their interpretive choices in words, the possibility of an entire ensemble made up of such players, with the further possibility that their individual 'idiot' interpretations meshed into a cohesive whole, seems too unlikely to warrant theoretical accommodation. (This case differs, of course, from that of players who are so experienced and have played together for so long that talk is not necessary. Players such as these could defend their interpretive decisions, if asked.)

- ¹⁷ Note that this question concerning the identity and individuation of PIs clearly differs from a similar-sounding question concerning work-identity. Goodman-bashers to the contrary, a sufficient number of wrong notes should make us leery about the identity of the work we are hearing. Changes that would threaten the continuity or identity of a PI are of a different sort: stylistic changes, changes in the phrasing or articulation of key motifs, marked changes in tempo or in emotional tone. We want to emphasize that none of these changes would pose any threat whatsoever to work identity.

- ¹⁸ These can range from facts about the audience, the weather, and the site to intangibles affecting the participants' energy, focus, and mood.



TRANSPARENCY AND THE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE

Jonathan Friday

I

KENDALL WALTON has made a startling claim about the photographic medium¹ that, if correct, has important consequences for the aesthetic significance of photography. This claim, which I will call 'Walton's transparency thesis', is that the invention of the camera not only gives us a new way of making pictures and a new kind of picture, it also gives us a new means of seeing objects. For Walton, when we look at a photograph we quite literally *see* the objects it depicts: 'Photographs are *transparent*. We see the world *through* them.'²

Photographic transparency claims of this sort have a long tradition, rooted perhaps in the kind of uncanny experience one can have when looking at a photograph, as described by, for example, Roland Barthes:

One day quite some time ago, I happened on a photograph of Napoleon's youngest brother, Jerome, taken in 1852. And I realized then, with an amazement I have not been able to lessen since. 'I am looking at eyes that looked at the emperor'.³

Taken as anything more than a fanciful metaphor, the claim that we can see through photographs may appear at first sight to be so highly counter-intuitive as not to merit serious attention. Nevertheless, I will argue that Walton's thesis does have a certain plausibility and that in order to arrive at a substantial reason for rejecting it, we will need to take sides on a contentious issue in the philosophy of perception. Therefore, in what follows I will sketch Walton's argument for transparency, defend him from a characteristic line of attack and provide a reason for resisting it by locating its theoretical underpinnings in the philosophy of perception. Finally, I will offer what I believe to be a better account of intuitions such as the one behind Barthes' amazement.

Before beginning, however, it is worth briefly noting what is aesthetically at stake if Walton's thesis is accepted. One of the most central tenets of modern aesthetic theory is the idea that a spectator's interest in an object *as a work of art* is an interest in the object for its own sake and not as a means to anything

independent of the object of attention. Among other things, this means that an aesthetic interest in a picture—whether it be a painting or a photograph—is not directed beyond the picture itself to, for example, what the picture is of. If photographs are transparent in the sense that we can see objects through them, then we cannot describe an aesthetic interest in their representational properties since those properties are merely a means to perceptual contact with the object depicted. It has been forcefully argued as a result of considerations such as these that photographic transparency of this sort implies that photography is not a representational art.⁴

It is not aesthetic considerations of this sort, however, that prompt transparency theorists like Walton and Barthes; rather, it is the type of causal connection that exists between a photograph and what it depicts. A photograph is not just a picture of an object, it is also in some sense a causal manifestation of it. Walton characterizes this connection between a photograph and the scene it depicts as 'natural counter-factual dependence': if the scene had been different, the photograph of it would have been different. By contrast, the connection between a painting and the objects it depicts is always intentional since what a painting depicts is by definition mediated by the thoughts of the painter.

Walton uses two philosophical science fiction stories to illustrate the way in which a photograph's causal relation to its subject implies his transparency thesis. In the first he asks us to imagine that an evil scientist disconnects the eyes from the optic nerves of a patient and connects those nerves to a device, the use of which enables him to give the patient whatever visual experiences he wishes. Even if we assume the scientist only feeds the patient information corresponding to his own visual experiences, such a patient only *seems* to see because her visual experiences are the result of the scientist seeing for her—they are visual experiences mediated by the scientist's beliefs about what is there to be seen. To see an object requires a certain kind of causal contact with it that is broken if the visual experiences of the object are mediated by the beliefs of another person. It is for this reason we do not see the objects depicted in a painting: they come to us mediated by the beliefs of the painter.

Walton's second story asks us to suppose that a patient undergoes a double eye transplant or is fitted with prosthetic eyes. Such a patient would be said to see normally because she is not dependent upon the beliefs of anyone else for the content of her visual experiences. On the basis of these two stories, Walton concludes that photographs are like prosthetic eyes: we can see through them because what we see has a natural counter-factual dependence upon the world, and therefore puts us in the right kind of unmediated perceptual contact with the objects of sight.

There is an air of sleight-of-hand about this conclusion that is heightened further by Walton's use of a slippery-slope argument to support it. That is, one of Walton's central arguments for his transparency thesis is of the sort

that moves from uncontroversial instances of seeing the world through certain instruments, down the slippery slope through slightly more controversial cases, to the example of the photograph. Walton writes:

No one will deny that we see through eyeglasses, mirrors and telescopes. How, then, would one justify denying that a security guard sees through a closed-circuit television monitor . . . or that fans watch athletic events when they watch live broadcasts of them? And after going this far, why not speak of watching events via delayed broadcasts . . . ? [This last example introduces] a new element: they have us seeing past events. But its importance isn't obvious. We also find ourselves speaking of observing through a telescope the explosion of a star which occurred millions of years ago. We encounter various other differences also . . . as we slide down the slope. The question is whether any of them is significant enough to justify digging in our heels and recognising a basic theoretical distinction between 'seeing' . . . things and not doing so.⁵

Ignoring for the moment the question of whether this argument gives any plausibility to Walton's claims about photography, we should note that slippery-slope arguments are notoriously unreliable. They often work by erroneously assuming that a group of things that have certain similarities deserve the same name, and by stressing these similarities, obscure fundamental differences. Not all slippery-slope arguments are invalid, however, and it would be wrong to dismiss Walton's out of hand.⁶

One of Walton's critics, however, takes up the challenge to find a basic theoretical distinction between ordinary seeing and seeing objects through photographs. Through a detailed discussion of differences that arise as we take various steps down the slippery slope, Nigel Warburton claims to have identified a 'cluster of features' central to the concept of seeing, each of which purportedly provides a theoretical difference sufficient to halt the slide to photographic transparency.⁷ In particular, he considers four features of ordinary seeing that he claims are central to the concept, which he calls (i) 'virtual simultaneity', (ii) 'temporal congruity', (iii) 'sensitivity to change' and (iv) 'knowledge of the causal chain'. I will briefly examine Warburton's account of these features to see if they tell against Walton's thesis.

First, consider virtual simultaneity. In almost all cases:

What is seen is virtually simultaneous with what is actually happening, any differences being a factor of the speed at which light travels. Even when viewing extremely distant objects such as stars there are no arbitrary hold ups in the path of the light travelling from object to eye. Still photographs always involve delay, and this delay is not a constant one.⁸

This claim about ordinary seeing is unassailably true, and yet it may not be quite as central to the concept of ordinary seeing as Warburton suggests. Suppose, for example, we had a set of prosthetic eyes that gave the user the

same visual experiences with the same degree of virtual simultaneity as normally functioning eyes. It is uncontroversial to claim that such prosthetic eyes would give their user ordinary visual experiences. Suppose, however, that these prosthetic eyes are very sophisticated and can be made, if the user so wishes, to delay the transmission of the focused image to the brain's photoreceptors. As such, when using these prosthetic eyes one could decide to amuse oneself by setting the delay function at, for example, one second. This would have the effect, at first, of causing an immediate one second visual blackout followed by a visual experience of the events that occurred one second before.

Would this be seeing? If we were inclined to think that a user of the prosthetic eyes who does not engage the delay function was seeing, what about the user of the prosthetic eyes who sets the delay factor at a tiny fraction of a second? Intuitions on this matter will no doubt vary, but if we are inclined to deny that it is seeing, a reason must be provided that is more than just a dogmatic denial that we cannot see past events. If our inclination is to say that it is a case of seeing, then Warburton's notion of virtual simultaneity is not the kind of theoretical break necessary to arrest the slide down the slippery slope.

Consider next what Warburton calls 'temporal congruity'. He writes:

If [a sprinter] takes 9.9 seconds to run 100 metres, it takes 9.9 seconds to see him do it. The time it takes to see a photograph, however, has nothing to do with the length of time represented in that image.⁹

Photographs are clearly not something that we can use to see temporally extended events. The force of this point is undermined, however, by noting that cinema is the kind of photographic medium that can represent such events—a point that Walton's argument depends upon. Even if there were no such medium of motion pictures, however, Walton's thesis would be undamaged by Warburton's point. For perceptual experience is of both events and objects; and, therefore, the fact that we cannot see events through photographs has no bearing on our ability to see *objects* in that way.

Consider next what Warburton calls 'sensitivity to change'. He writes:

Potentially visible changes in the object are matched by changes in what is seen. Still photographs do not match changes in the objects, except in as much as if the object had been different, then the photograph would have been different.¹⁰

As with the previous point about our inability to see events through still photographs, the present point about sensitivity to change will only tell against photographic transparency if events (rather than objects) have ontological priority as the subjects of perceptual experience. Moreover, visible changes in an object's appearance can be matched by an appropriate photo-

graphic medium such as motion pictures. If you want to see an event through a photographic image, such as an object changing, you need to attend to the kind of photographic image that can reflect events.

Finally, consider what Warburton calls 'knowledge of causal chains'. He writes:

In order to see something we need to have a basic knowledge of how our perceptions are linked to the object that caused them, which features of our perceptions are to be discarded as arising from deviant causal chains and so on . . . With most uses of photography we have very little knowledge of the causal chain set up from image to object . . . When someone points to a kingfisher and says 'Look', I will almost certainly be in a position to draw immediate inferences about my position relative to the bird . . . If however someone else is pointing my camera obscura at the kingfisher and I have no way of discovering anything about the causal link between the bird and the image, what sort of lens is being used, whether mirrors are involved, and so on, whether the bird is really in front of me or to my left, there comes a point when we might be reluctant to say that I see the kingfisher.¹¹

That is, photographs and camera obscura images show us objects, but in looking at these images we do not *see* the objects because we lack sufficient knowledge of the causal chains giving us the image to know where these objects are in relation to us. His example, however, of *seeing* (or failing to really see) the kingfisher through the camera obscura is telling. The patterns of light reflecting off the actual kingfisher are the very same patterns of light focused into an image on a viewer's retinas. As such, the kingfisher causes the viewer to have the visual experience he does, even if the viewer does not know precisely how those patterns of reflected light got to his eyes or where they came from. Consequently, why should there be any problem with saying that one sees the bird through the camera obscura image—regardless of how ignorant one is of the causal link between bird and image—provided one is at least certain that there is a causal link of the appropriate kind?

Warburton's intuition that knowledge of the causal chain is central to something being a case of seeing is supported by his assertion that the capacity for sight 'stems from the evolutionary function of sight as an aid to finding our way around our immediate environment'.¹² But from the fact that our ability to see evolved for this reason it does not follow that we only see when we have the kind of knowledge of causal chains that Warburton gives such theoretical significance to. For on such reasoning it would also follow from the fact that we evolved the capacity for spoken language in order to communicate with our fellow beings, that we only speak when we are communicating with our fellow beings. Consequently, a photograph's failure to provide information about the causal chains will not provide the necessary theoretical distinction.

Walton's slippery slope is, therefore, a good deal more slippery than Warburton recognizes. Rather than considering attempts by other critics to pro-

vide a theoretical difference of the sort that would halt the slide—each of which can, I believe, be answered reasonably adequately—I would instead like to consider what it is that makes the slope slippery. Identifying the lubricant will provide us with a more satisfying means of resisting Walton's thesis.

II

The slippery slope is made slippery by an innocent looking premise of the argument that arises in passing when Walton notes that his argument requires an account of what seeing is. He then writes:

I would subscribe to some variety of causal theory: to see something is to have visual experiences that are caused, in a certain manner, by what is seen.¹³

An innocent enough looking premise, but as Walton recognizes, there are different varieties of causal theory. In particular, we might distinguish between causal theories of a direct realist and a representationalist variety. Whether Walton is assuming a direct or a representationalist causal theory can be shown to make all the difference to the acceptability of his transparency thesis.

The basic distinction between these two types of causal theory is familiar enough: for the representationalist, ordinary perception is mediated by some mental object such that we see objects in virtue of our perception of the mental object. The direct realist's position is largely defined against this: perception is direct and unmediated by any mental object. It is representationalism, however, that concerns us here. By briefly sketching a representationalist version of the causal theory, and by drawing the connections with Walton's transparency thesis, we can see how that thesis acquires whatever plausibility it has from representationalism.

Like every other form of causal theory, representationalism begins with some basic scientific facts about perception. Light reflects off objects and travels to the eye causing an image to be formed on the retina which in turn causes a reaction in the optic nerve and so on, the last event in this causally related sequence being a visual experience of the object. Walton's thesis depends on a similar story: light reflected off an object enters a causally related sequence that ends in the encoding of these patterns of reflected light in a picture that will then reflect those same patterns of light. When we look at a photograph the light reflected off it travels to the eye entering into the causally related sequence sketched above.

Clearly, the scientific account I have given cannot be all there is to the causal theory since rather than telling us what seeing is, it only tells us that what we see is caused in the appropriate way. What is lacking might be called the mental story, and the starting point for this part of the causal theory is the fact that together, the eye, the optic nerve and the brain condition the

information derived from the object of sight, and in doing so provide part of the content of the visual experience—e.g. colour. Add to this the famous arguments from introspection and illusion and the account of seeing that emerges involves an experience of a mental object—classically thought of as a mental picture—that functions as an intermediary between the observer and the physical world. With the postulation of such a mental object we arrive at representationalism.

For the representationalist to distinguish between seeing and hallucination, he must argue that a certain relation exists between the mental representations we purportedly see through and the objects we see. And the relation he is likely to postulate will be very much like the natural counter-factual dependence that Walton notes is the defining feature of photographs. That is, for the representationalist, the guarantee that we are seeing is that differences in the scene before us make for differences in our mental picture of the scene and, therefore, for differences in our visual experience. It is this property of mental pictures that licenses the claim that they are being seen through to the objects in the world. Likewise, for Walton, it is this property of a photograph that licenses the claim that we can see through photographs.

Representationalism has every appearance, therefore, of being the lubrication that makes Walton's slippery slope slippery. For if there is no objection to saying that we see through mental pictures that meet certain conditions, why should we object to the claim that we can see through physical intermediaries that meet the same conditions? Indeed, not only does Walton's thesis gain plausibility from representationalism, representationalist theorists frequently resort to the possibility of seeing by means of physical intermediaries in order to lend plausibility to the claim that perception is mentally mediated. For example, in an argument against direct realist perceptual theories, one modern representationalist, John Mackie, has written:

Ordinary language calls perception direct if it is of objects we touch with our hands, see by means of rays of light that come to our eyes, and so on, but indirect if the rays of light are reflected from a mirror or if a television camera and screen are inserted into the visual path, and so on. But what is so important about hands and eyes, as opposed to all the other actual or possible stages in the process? Why should directness thus construed matter?¹⁴

Similar appeals to examples of mediated perception are made by other modern representationalists like Ayer¹⁵ and O'Shaughnessy,¹⁶ and also by classical representationalists such as Arnauld.¹⁷ Of course, representationalism does not logically imply Walton's thesis, but as we have seen, it will prove very difficult for a representationalist to provide a substantial enough theoretical difference between ordinary seeing and seeing through photographs to avoid Walton's conclusion.

I will not consider the viability of representationalist theories; however, as Jonathan Dancy's recent survey of the issue illustrates, representationalist theories fare poorly compared with those of the direct realist.¹⁸ Consequently, if we find the slide down Walton's slippery slope an unattractive prospect, we would do well to turn to direct realism to provide a reason for resisting his transparency thesis. For the direct realist argues that seeing in virtue of any mediators, whether they be mental or physical, does not provide a coherent account of perception and that perception must be understood to be direct unmediated visual contact with the object of perception. The direct realist does not slide down the slippery slope, but then he never makes the mistake of taking that first slippery step down.¹⁹

III

The direct realist must pay a price for his hesitancy to step onto the slippery slope. He must be able to provide an account of our experience of mirror images and photographs which explains why we speak of them as if we do see objects through, or by means of, such images. The direct realist must be able to provide a meaningful explanation of Barthes' and Walton's pre-theoretical sense that they can see long-dead ancestors and the siblings of emperors through photographs. We might, therefore, describe what the direct realist has to provide as an 'error-theory'.²⁰

It becomes more obvious that an error-theory is required to explain our belief that we *really see* objects reflected in a mirror if we consider Gombrich's discussion of this phenomenon:

It is a fascinating exercise in illusionist representation to trace one's own head on the surface of [a steamy] mirror and to clear the area enclosed by the outline. For only when we have actually done this do we realize how small the image is which gives us the illusion of seeing ourselves 'face-to-face'. To be exact, it must be precisely half the size of our head . . . But however cogently this fact can be demonstrated with the help of similar triangles, the assertion is usually met with frank incredulity. And despite all the geometry, I, too, would stubbornly contend that I really see my head (natural size) when I shave and that the size on the mirror surface is a phantom.²¹

Gombrich is right: geometrical proofs notwithstanding, we do normally treat a mirror image as if it were putting us into direct perceptual contact with the objects we see reflected. If we do not *really* or *literally* see these objects, what explanation can be given of this persistent error in thinking we do?

Gombrich suggests an answer to this question with his reference to our experience of a mirror image being one of an illusion that we are literally seeing what is reflected (or represented) by the mirror image. Applied to our experience of mirror images, this account has a certain plausibility. Moreover, since the same notion serves as the basis of Gombrich's account of the nature of

pictorial representation, it would have an obvious application to photographic images. That is, just as we *see* the mirror image *as* what it reflects—such that we do not see what is reflected, but see the reflection (in the manner of an illusion) *as* what is reflected—so too do we have the illusion of seeing objects through photographs when we see those photographs *as* what they depict.

The concept of 'seeing-as' together with the characterization of the experience in terms of illusion may provide an attractive error-theory for a direct realist trying to account for our sense that we do literally see objects by means of mirror images, but the extension of this line of thought to photographic images is less convincing.²² This is because our experience of seeing photographic images *as* what they depict does not appear to be an illusion at all. When Barthes had the uncanny experience of seeing Jerome through a photograph, he was not mistaking the photograph for Jerome—all the while discounting arguments to the effect that the photograph is not really Jerome. Indeed, Gombrich's characterization of the experience of pictorial representation as a visual illusion of what is depicted has been widely criticized.²³ Although we may be under an illusion that when looking at a mirror image we, literally, are seeing the objects reflected, making illusion the central concept in a characterization of the experience of pictorial (including photographic) representation seems misplaced.

Notice, however, that what is in doubt is whether illusion is the right characterization of our experience of pictorial representation, and not the direct realist claim that a photograph (or a mirror image) is *seen as* what it depicts or reflects. As such, the direct realist can provide an explanation of the intuition that photographs are transparent in terms of the claim that we see the photographic image *as if* it were the object depicted—where this experience is given some characterization other than Gombrich's notion of illusion. I will suggest how this might be done by briefly considering *seeing-as* and other related visual concepts.

Gombrich borrowed the notion of *seeing-as* from Wittgenstein, whose discussion of aspect-seeing is one of the most familiar features of Part II of the *Philosophical Investigations*. An often overlooked feature of that discussion is the contrast Wittgenstein explicitly draws between aspect-dawning experiences (like, for example, seeing the duck-rabbit picture first as a duck, then as a rabbit) and the continuous seeing of an aspect:

I must distinguish between 'continuous seeing' of an aspect and the 'dawning' of an aspect. The [duck-rabbit] picture might have been shown to me, and I never have seen anything but a rabbit in it. Here it is useful to introduce the idea of a picture object. For instance . . . a 'picture-face'. In some respects I stand towards it as I do toward a human face. I can study its expression, can react to it as the expression of a human face . . . I may, then, have seen the duck-rabbit simply as a picture rabbit from the first. That is to say, if asked . . . 'What do you see here?'

I should have replied 'A picture-rabbit' . . . I should not have answered . . . by saying 'Now I am seeing it as a picture rabbit'.²⁴

Aspect-dawning experiences, one criterion of which is temporally formulated reports of what is seen, are clearly not relevant for an understanding of photographic imagery. We continuously see photographs as what they depict. Indeed, it can be argued that a primary error made by those who have employed seeing-as to explain the visual experience of representation is their failure to grasp Wittgenstein's point that continuous seeing is the appropriate perceptual concept for the analysis of our experience of unambiguous pictures. A point made abundantly clear in the following remark:

Perhaps the following expression would have been better: we *regard* the photograph, the picture on our wall, as the object itself (the man, landscape, and so on) depicted there.²⁵

Although seeing-as and regarding-as are distinctively different visual experiences, one thread that links them is the attitude one has to what is being seen. Whether I am flip-flopping my attention from duck to rabbit or continuously regarding a picture as a rabbit, I have an attitude towards picture and photograph which determines my experience of what is depicted. It is by attending to this attitudinal feature of the regarding-as experience that we will find an explanation for the claim that photographs are transparent.

When we regard a picture as what it depicts we have an attitude towards it in which in some respects we treat it as if it were the object depicted. But in what respects? The most important of them is the spontaneous and unhesitating way in which we describe the picture in a manner conforming to the descriptions that we give of the real objects depicted. There is more to the attitude than bringing the picture under a concept, however, since, for example, if I love the person depicted in the photograph, it is with the same love that I will regard them when looking at the picture. All of the ways in which I react to the picture, including my descriptions of it, determine my attitude towards it.

The direct realist can adapt Wittgenstein's discussion of regarding-as to explain any intuitions that we might have that we can quite literally see through photographs by reference to a particular kind of attitude towards a photograph in which it is, in some respects, treated as if it puts us in direct perceptual contact with the objects it depicts. Such an attitude is revealed by, for example, our treatment of photographs as evidence and as a window on past events and states of affairs. On some occasions, however, this attitude can be so heightened that we are struck with amazement of the sort that Barthes reports. Wittgenstein suggests that we think of such experiences as akin to an

aspect-dawning even while we are regarding the picture as what it depicts.²⁶ I will not consider whether this suggestion is helpful since the more primary point is already made—the intuition that we can quite literally see through photographs is the result of confusing an attitude towards what is seen with a ‘new way of seeing’. To say that a photograph is transparent is to characterize the attitude we have to the causally produced picture we see.

Another way of characterizing photographic transparency without a commitment to literally seeing through the photographic image does not depend upon any recognition of vivid visual experiences of the sort Barthes describes. Rather, this sense of transparency is discovered through reflection upon a different feature of the attitude we can have to photographs. When we regard a photograph as what it depicts, the attitude to the photograph may often be one in which we treat it as evidence of what is depicted on the basis of our pre-theoretical grasp of photography’s causal relation to its subject. I am using the term ‘evidence’ here to characterize not only the way in which a photograph may be accepted in a courtroom, but also the ways in which photographs can document, can remind and inform us of the appearances of objects, events and states of affairs. In this sense of transparency, we see through photographs in virtue of an attitude towards them in which they are regarded as providing, or as being a means to, reliable information about the world.²⁷ Such an attitude indicates that one’s interest is not in the photograph itself, but in what it is a causal manifestation of. A practical attitude such as this is far removed from an aesthetic attitude to the photographic image in which the spectator’s attention is directed solely to the image itself while being indifferent to the real existence of what is depicted.

IV

Claims such as these—that our attitude to photography is a practical one—are often greeted with hostility by those who value photography as an art on the grounds that photography is being misrepresented and/or diminished as a medium of aesthetic value. The idea that photographic transparency somehow misrepresents the photographic medium often comes down to a resistance to the characterization of the medium as primarily causal. These arguments do point out much that is crucial for coming to an understanding of where the aesthetic significance of the photographic medium lays. Nevertheless, with regard to any transparency thesis, these arguments run aground upon the inescapable fact that having a primarily causal relation with its subject matter is one of the criteria by which we judge that something is a photograph. If too much intentional control is exerted by the photographer over his image, we will no longer be willing to call the resulting image a photograph. *

The other problem with the arguments of those sceptical of transparency is that they conflate two distinctly different points which are at stake. Certainly, there is the claim that transparency implies that we cannot describe an

aesthetic interest in photographic representation because our attitude to the photograph is one which treats the photograph as a means to what it depicts. It does not follow from this, however, that photography is not a means of representing the world that can have aesthetic significance—rather, it follows only that we cannot describe an aesthetic interest in what is represented. The queerness of the photographic medium is also the source of its wonder: here is a medium of aesthetic value that, while being representational, is not significant for that quality. And here we need to remember that aesthetic representation is not the only, or even the most important, source of aesthetic value.

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- ⁴ Cf. Roger Scruton, 'Photography and Representation', in *The Aesthetic Understanding* (London: Methuen, 1983), pp. 102–26.
- ⁵ Walton, *op. cit.*, p. 252.
- ⁶ Cf. Douglas Walton, *Slippery-slope Arguments* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), particularly chapter 4 for a discussion of the type of slippery-slope argument Walton employs.
- ⁷ Nigel Warburton, 'Seeing Through "Seeing Through Photographs"', *Ratio*, Vol. 1 (June 1988), pp. 62–74.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 73.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 73.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 73.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 71–2.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 73.
- ¹³ Walton, *op. cit.*, p. 261.
- ¹⁴ John Mackie, *Problems From Locke* (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 1976), p. 46.
- ¹⁵ A. J. Ayer, *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge* (London: Macmillan, 1940), pp. 3–4.
- ¹⁶ Brian O'Shaughnessy, *The Will*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1980), p. 172.
- ¹⁷ Arnauld, *On True and False Ideas*, trans. Stephen Gaukroger (Manchester: Manchester U. P., 1990), p. 9.
- ¹⁸ Jonathan Dancy, *Contemporary Epistemology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), chapters 10–11.
- ¹⁹ A different strategy for resisting the slippery slope without making an explicit commitment to direct realism is provided by Gregory Currie in 'Photography, Painting and Representation', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 49 (Winter 1991), pp. 23–9. Currie takes what he calls a 'defensive' posture against Walton. Starting with the assumption that photographs are as much representations as paintings are, and as such are not a means of perceptual access, Currie rejects Walton's attempts to connect the ordinary seeing of an object with the seeing of that object in a photograph. Currie's arguments deserve independent scrutiny, but his account of the differences between 'natural' and 'intentional' representation clearly demonstrate his unwillingness to step onto the slippery slope. For although Currie's non-photographic examples of natural representation are such things as thermometers and barometers, mirror images exhibit the pattern of counter-factual

dependence he claims is definitive of natural representations

- ²⁰ An inability to provide such an error-theory is one of the drawbacks of adopting Gregory Currie's 'defensive' (cf. reference 19 above) strategy against Walton.

²¹ E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion* (London: Phaidon, 1960), p. 5

²² Gombrich rejects too strict an analogy between mirror images and photographs; *ibid.*, p. 30.

²³ Cf., for example, Richard Wollheim, 'Reflections on *Art and Illusion*', in *On Art and the Mind* (Cambridge: Harvard U. P., 1974), pp. 260–89; Flint Schier, *Deeper into Pictures* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P.,

1986), pp. 9–11, Patrick Maynard, 'Seeing Double', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 52 (Spring 1994), pp. 155–67.

²⁴ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958), p. 194. Wittgenstein provides a simple drawing of a face in the text, and it is to this he is referring in the passage.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

²⁷ This sense of transparency is compatible with Gregory Currie's characterization of photographs as 'natural' representations—these being defined merely by a certain pattern of counter-factual dependence.

FICTIONAL TRUTH AND FICTIONAL AUTHORS

David Davies

Fiction . . . is the product of a communicative act; an act that shares with other communicative acts like asserting or requesting a Gricean intentional structure. In performing such a communicative act the author attempts to elicit a certain response from his audience; the desired response is that the audience make believe the story told by the author. The reader of fiction is invited by the author to engage in a game of make-believe, the structure of the game being in part dictated by the text of the author's work. What is said in the text, together with certain background assumptions, generates a set of fictional truths: those things that are true in the fiction. Anything that is true in the fiction is available for the reader to make believe. A large part of playing a game of fictional make-believe is to work out what is true in the fiction, and hence what it is appropriate to make believe.¹

I

PHILOSOPHERS WHO claim to be working on the problem of 'fictional truth' may have one of two things in mind. On the one hand, there is the problem, canvassed by Gregory Currie in the above passage, of specifying the conditions under which something is 'true in a fiction'. On the other hand, there is the task of explaining 'fictional truth' in the sense more obviously relevant to the cognitive claims of literature. Such claims to what we might label 'truth *through* fiction' rest upon the assumption that what is fictional can, none the less, represent to readers significant features of the actual world. Truth *in* fiction, on the other hand, is simply truth in a story, being true of a 'fictional world', and this, we might think, is a matter whose elucidation will occasion no great endeavour. Yet, as the literature demonstrates, giving an adequate account of truth in fiction turns out to be much trickier than one might imagine.

My initial focus in this paper is Currie's attempt to explicate 'truth in fiction' in terms of the beliefs of a 'fictional author'. I begin by sketching the problems which Currie's account is supposed to solve. After outlining his proposed solution, I present some examples that bring out a serious lacuna in his account. Finally, I argue against a plausible emendation of Currie's account, based on a recent proposal by Alex Byrne, and offer reasons to think that the

problem of truth in fiction may be less tractable than writers like Currie have assumed.

II

Following Currie (p. 57), I shall employ the operator *F*, meaning 'it is fictional that', or 'it is true in the story that', and abbreviate the claim that, for a given proposition *P* and a given story *S*, it is fictional in *S* that *P*, as: *F_S*(*P*). The simplest account of truth in fiction would be the following: '*F_S*(*P*)' is true iff (if and only if) it is explicitly stated in the text of *S* that *P*,² where it is 'explicitly stated' in a text that *P* just in case the text contains, as a proper part,³ an expression that, if asserted, would have as its assertoric content that *P*. (Note that this characterization of what is 'explicitly stated' in a text is neutral as to whether utterers of fictional texts themselves assert the sentences comprising those texts.) Being explicitly stated in the text of *S* is neither necessary nor sufficient for being true in *S*, however. It is not *necessary* because we must allow for at least some things to be true in the story though neither explicitly stated nor immediately derivable from what is explicitly stated.⁴ It is not *sufficient*, on the other hand, because we want to allow for deceptive or deceived narrators, or for narrators who consistently understate, exaggerate, or employ irony.

It would seem, in fact, that an adequate solution to the problem of truth in fiction must provide answers to at least the following questions: (i) How is it determined what is explicitly stated in a text *T* in which a story *S* is narrated? (ii) Given what is explicitly stated in *T*, how is it determined what is true in *S* simply in virtue of being so explicitly stated—what is, as we might say, 'explicitly true in *S*'? (iii) How is it determined, given what is explicitly stated in *S*, what is implicated to be true in *S* in virtue of what is so stated (where what is explicitly stated in *T* *need not* itself be explicitly true in *S*—consider, for example, ironic uses of language)? Such truths, generated by Gricean conversational implicatures and tropical uses of language, may be said to be non-explicitly true in *S* by direct implication. Finally, (iv) how is it determined what is non-explicitly true in *S* either as unstated background or as a consequence of unstated background and those things that are either explicitly true in *S* or non-explicitly true by direct implication?⁵ We would expect at least partial answers to the first three questions to be derivable from more general principles taken to be determinative of the content of linguistic utterances, verbal and written, in both fictional and non-fictional contexts. The distinctive problem for a theory of fictional truth, then, is (iv). Answering (iv) seems to require that we specify a set of principles governing legitimate inferences *from* what is explicitly true in a story, or non-explicitly true by direct implication, to certain non-explicit truths, where such principles serve to identify a set of *background conditions* which are themselves non-explicitly true in *S*.

Talk of 'determining' what is true, admits, of course, of both epistemological and metaphysical readings. But even the most incorrigible realist tends to see the two readings as closely linked when what is at issue is truth in a story. This feature of truth in fiction expresses itself as a further constraint on an account of fictional truth, reflecting our reasons for *seeking* such an account. As the quotation at the beginning of this paper suggests, the issue cannot be viewed as merely metaphysical: our interests in such matters dictate that a satisfactory account of what it is for something to be true in fiction furnish us with a way of proceeding in our attempts to determine, for particular fictional works, what is true in them. It would be of no interest, for example, to identify fictional truth with what is true in the 'fictional world' of a story if the only way of delimiting this fictional world is via *prior* decisions concerning what is true in the story.⁶

Currie examines Lewis' suggestion that fictional truth is to be explicated in terms of a counter-factual situation in which the text of a story *S* is uttered as known fact—we may term such a situation an 'S-world', for the fictional story *S*. The many S-worlds for any given story will differ dramatically in respect of matters not explicitly characterized in the text. Obviously, we cannot require, for ' $F_S(P)$ ' to be true, that *P* be true in *every* S-world, since this is equivalent to the discredited suggestion that truth in a story is co-extensive with what is explicitly stated in the text of that story.⁷ We must therefore restrict in some way the class of S-worlds by reference to which truth in *S* is to be determined. The following possibilities merit consideration: ' $F_S(P)$ ' is true (if and?) only if *P* is true in the class of S-worlds in which (given appropriate modifications to accommodate what is explicitly true in *S*):⁸

- (F1) those things are true that *are* true in the actual world;
- (F2) those things are true that we, as readers, *believe* to be true in the actual world;
- (F3) those things are true that the *real author believes* to be true in the actual world;
- (F4) those things are true that *members of the intended audience* believe to be true in the actual world.

F1 and F2 are clearly unsatisfactory. First, each radically divorces fictional truth from the contexts in which works are generated in sometimes strongly counter-intuitive ways.⁹ Additionally, if F1 and F2 are read as biconditionals, F1 entails that all sorts of trivial and less trivial facts about the actual world (including ones that we may never know) are true in every story from which they are not excluded by what is explicitly true in that story, while F2 entails that what is true in a story changes as *our* beliefs change. The obvious strategy is to delimit the relevant class of S-worlds by reference to what is or was believed in the context in which the work was generated. F3 and F4 represent

possible analyses. F_3 , however, provides neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for being true in a story. It is not *sufficient* because an author may have strange and idiosyncratic beliefs that are completely orthogonal to what is explicitly true in the story. And it is not *necessary* because we want to allow for non-explicit truths in a story that contradict the author's actual beliefs—for example, as Lewis suggests, non-explicit truths about the fire-breathing capacities of dragons in a fairy story. Currie argues (pp. 68–70) that Lewis' own suggestion, a variant on F_4 , is unable to deal with stories in which *inconsistent* truths obtain, for example, certain sorts of 'time-travel' stories: the problem is that the 'worlds' to which we appeal in our counter-factual analysis of fictional truth must themselves be *consistent*; there are no models for inconsistent sets of propositions.

III

To resolve this problem, Currie proposes an analysis of truth in a story *not* in terms of possible worlds in which a given belief-set is true, but, rather, in terms of the belief-sets themselves. More specifically, he identifies what is true in the story with the set of beliefs reasonably imputed to what he terms the 'fictional author':

' $F_3(P)$ ' is true iff it is reasonable for the informed reader to infer that the fictional author of S believes that P . (p. 80)

The 'fictional author', an essential element in the games of make-believe generated by fictional works on Currie's general theory of fiction, is the 'reliable source' from whom the reader learns about the events narrated in the story: 'The fictional author (as I shall call him) is that fictional character constructed within our make-believe whom we take to be telling us the story as known fact. Our reading is thus an exploration of the fictional author's belief structure' (p. 76). It is claimed that this account overcomes residual difficulties facing Lewis' variant on F_4 , because belief-sets have just the properties we want fictional truth to have—they are 'negation incomplete', not closed under deduction, and may be inconsistent taken as a whole (p. 74).

Currie insists that the fictional author (the f.a.) is distinct from both the *real* author and the explicit narrator(s), if any, in the story—as must indeed be the case if Currie's proposal is to evade already rehearsed objections to alternative accounts. What, then, is the status of the f.a., and how are her beliefs, and thus the set of P for which ' $F_3(P)$ ' is true, to be determined? Currie suggests that, in our attempts to determine the belief structure of the f.a., we are guided by two sorts of considerations: (i) the text itself, which provides our only direct evidence as to the f.a.'s character and mental idiosyncracies; and (ii) background assumptions concerning the 'historical situatedness' of the f.a. Our principal guide in establishing the latter is the historical situation of the

real author, for 'it is quite likely that the kind of person the fictional author is will depend in some way or other on the kind of person the real author is . . . When we read a work from a certain period and place, we usually assume we are dealing with a fictional author of that period and place' (p. 78). But, as Currie immediately notes, this is not always the case:

A modern author who writes a novel set in the Middle Ages may succeed in placing within the novel a fictional author who has the beliefs that medieval people tended to have. In that case, what will be true in the novel will reflect medieval belief. More likely, his fictional author will display beliefs and attitudes that are distinctly modern. In that case, what is true in the novel will have little to do with the overt beliefs of medieval times. (Ibid.)

But *how are we, as readers, to distinguish these two types of cases?* Faced with a novel whose temporal or cultural setting differs from that of the author, how are we to 'situate' the f.a. historically or culturally? More specifically, how does the f.a. 'display beliefs and attitudes' of a particular kind? In response to all such questions, Currie appeals to the *first* kind of evidence cited above: it is properties of the *text* that enable us to situate the f.a. It is our reading of the text that enables us to locate the f.a. *within* a given community, and identify any beliefs idiosyncratic in the context of that community (pp. 79–80). It is the 'overall impression' of the work that guides our judgements as to what is explicitly true in a story, given what is explicitly stated (pp. 99–100). The style of a story is the means whereby the personality of the *fictional* author is displayed (p. 122). And, finally, it is evidence internal to the text that enables us to determine when the f.a.'s beliefs part company with the expressed beliefs of an explicit narrator (p. 124).

IV

Currie's proposal, then, is that, *qua* 'informed readers', we determine what is true in a story by determining the belief structure of the f.a., and we historically situate and individuate the f.a. on the basis of our knowledge of the story's provenance (the identity and historical situation of the *real* author) and our reading of the text. Clearly, this is what Currie *has* to say, if his proposal is to evade his own objection against accounts of fictional truth that presuppose *prior* judgements of the sort the theory is supposed to elucidate. Provenance is relevant because we are viewing the reading of fictional texts as an engagement in games of make-believe generated by particular conversational acts of fiction-making. But, given our knowledge of provenance, identification of the f.a. cannot proceed on the basis of any prior judgements as to what is true in the story that do not themselves issue from our engagement in the game of make-believe generated by the text.

To see what is wrong with Currie's account, consider, as exemplifying a more general difficulty, Russell Hoban's novel, *Riddley Walker*.¹⁰ This novel,

set in a post-nuclear British culture whose inhabitants have 'mistakenly' reassembled various recognizable fragments of *our* culture, has a first-person narrator who shares his culture's beliefs about the historical relationships between these fragments. Nothing *in the text* undercuts the credibility of the narrator, or 'displays beliefs and attitudes that are distinctly modern'. Suppose we ask: Is it true in the story that the narrator and his culture misunderstand the significance of the cultural fragments in question? If, as I think we must, we answer this question affirmatively, then, if Currie's account is to accommodate such an example, we must situate the 'fictional author' *not* in the narrator's culture but in that of the real author (our *own*). But how is the decision so to situate the f.a. to be made in terms of the resources available within Currie's framework? For, clearly, Currie wants to allow, quite properly, that there can be non-explicit truths in fiction that contradict what either we or the real author believe.

It is helpful, here, to compare *Riddley Walker* with a novel like *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.¹¹ In spite of our belief, and (let us assume) Marquez's belief, that natural events proceed according to natural laws, we presumably do not want to say that the various 'supernatural' events narrated in the story have natural explanations *in the story*. In this case, if Currie's account is to comply with our critical judgements, we must locate the f.a. within the culture of the *narrator*, *not* within the culture of the real author. But, I would suggest, the different decisions concerning the historico-cultural situation of the f.a. in the two cases *cannot* be justified by reference to different properties of the two *texts*, nor by reference to general background information concerning the historico-cultural situation of the real author. Rather, it is *because* we decide that the deceived state of the narrator's culture in *Riddley Walker* is true in the story, whereas we make no such decision in the case of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, that we situate the f.a. as we do. Such decisions on our part are grounded in judgements concerning the point of the act of fiction-making generative of the texts in question, a matter I discuss in more detail below. But this requires that at least some decisions concerning what is 'true in the fiction', and thus what we are invited to make believe, *logically precede* judgements concerning the beliefs of the fictional author.¹² So, if there is a place for talk of the 'fictional author' in a theory of fiction, it cannot be the role allotted to this device by Currie.

V

There are, I believe, two lessons to be drawn from this discussion, the second of which is less obvious but more important for a theory of fiction. The first, more obvious, lesson is that we need to reconsider how to analyse the notion of 'truth in fiction'. If we preserve Currie's thesis that fictional truth is a matter of what the reader is invited to make believe, we might be tempted by an analysis that incorporates the *real* author, not in respect of her general

beliefs about the world, but, rather, in respect of how *she intends* her story to be received. The most obvious candidate,

'F_s(P)' is true just in case the real author of S intends the reader to make believe that P,

is clearly inadequate, since it does not allow for the *failure* of the real author to produce a work in which her intention is realized. As with Currie's own proposal, it seems we must take into account the reasonable inferences that would be made by a suitably informed receiver of the author's text. Adapting a recent suggestion along such lines by Alex Byrne,¹³ the following proposal recommends itself:

'F_s(P)' is true just in case a suitably informed reader would infer that the real author of S invites the reader of S to make believe that P.

Following Byrne, I shall refer to the 'suitably informed reader' of a story S as 'the Reader' of S. The proposal fails to specify, in general terms, the kinds of circumstances under which an individual would qualify as a 'suitably informed' reader of a given story S, and its plausibility will clearly vary according to how this lacuna is filled.¹⁴

All plausible attempts to render the proposal more precise seem open, however, to the objection that we can envision situations in which the Reader would (i) infer that the author intends her to make believe that P, yet also (ii) hold that the text uttered by the author is insufficient to realize this intention. In such cases, a proposition P may satisfy the proposed analysis, offered as a sufficient condition for being true in a fiction, yet not be true in the fiction in question. Let me sketch an example.¹⁵ First, suppose that the Reader of a story S would reasonably infer that the author of S invites her to make believe the following: [HM] Much human misfortune befalls the sufferer because of a surfeit of pride. What inferences the Reader would reasonably make depends on the sorts of cognitive resources available to her, which, in turn, reflects a view as to when a reader is 'suitably informed'. On some accounts, the Reader might draw upon her acquaintance with other works by the author in which it is explicitly or non-explicitly true that the downfall of the central character stems from his or her pride. Such resources might be ascribed to the Reader on the grounds that acquaintance with other works is *always* relevant to a proper understanding of the story, or, alternatively, on the grounds that it is clear from the text of S that such an acquaintance features among the cognitive resources that would most obviously enable the Reader to make sense of that text.¹⁶ On the other hand, the basis for the Reader's inferences might be more limited—for example, explicit assertions by the narrator of S, or an epigraph to the story selected by the real author.

The Reader, reading the text T, in which S is narrated, in the light of this inference concerning the author's intentions, would infer that the author is inviting her to make believe that the painful events that befall the central character C in the story S arise because of C's prideful nature. But, given what she infers herself to be invited to make believe in virtue of other things explicitly stated in T, the Reader takes such an explanation of C's conduct to be psychologically implausible. The Reader cannot make sense of what (explicitly) happens in the story in terms of the sorts of psychological mechanisms posited in [HM] unless the Reader also infers, simply on the basis of this difficulty, that the author is further inviting her to make believe that the world of the story is one in which standard assumptions about human psychology fail to apply. (Note that, *ex hypothesi*, the Reader's difficulty stems not from the generalization [HM] *per se*, but from its supposed applicability to the events that befall C.) The most reasonable inference for the Reader to make is that: (i) the author is inviting her to make believe that, the normal assumptions about human psychology applying, C's fateful actions were motivated by pride, but that (ii) the text constructed by the author—the manner in which this invitation is extended—prevents the Reader from accepting the invitation. In such circumstances, it seems clear, we should not say that it is true in the story that C's fateful actions were motivated in the way that the author invites us to make believe.

I maintain, therefore, that the Reader's recognition that the author is inviting her to make believe that P is not sufficient to make it true in the fiction that P: the Reader's recognition has to be produced 'in the right way' by the reading of the text, it would appear. Can we then say what counts as 'the right way' here? We might say that the Reader's recognition is produced in the right way just in case the Reader would be willing to make believe that P as a result of her inferring, through her reading of the text, that the author is inviting the reader to engage in such make-believe. This is unhelpful, however, because it fails to enlighten us as to the sorts of circumstances under which the Reader *would* be so willing.

I have no easy solution to offer to this problem. But it is far from clear that we should be looking for the sort of answer that writers like Currie and Byrne assume is possible. This brings me to the second lesson to be drawn from my argument against Currie, a lesson sharpened by the foregoing reflections upon the variant of Byrne's proposal. It is fundamental to the sort of approach Currie favours to the issue of truth in fiction that an account of truth in a story, an account of what he terms 'story meaning', is *basic* to an account of fiction in the sense that it is presupposed by any attempt to understand the 'meaning' of a fictional work in any deeper sense. Thus, he distances his own project from critical concerns with 'the work's genre, its symbolic elements, its underlying moral and aesthetic vision':

What I have said about the notion of fictional truth allows no ready generalization to cover these other aspects. I have concentrated on story meaning here partly because it is the most tractable element in all that can be called . . . the meaning of a fictional work; it seems to be that aspect most likely to yield to an analysis of some precision. Another reason is that the story meaning is basic in our understanding of these other, perhaps more glamorous, kinds of meaning. If we have no firm grip on the story the work has to tell—if we are confused about what is true in the story—we are likely to go wrong in our probing of its symbolic or metaphysical content. (pp. 117–118)

In the case of *Riddley Walker*, I would suggest, it is precisely because we see the deceived status of the narrator's culture as crucial to the *point* of the novel—because we recognize, perhaps, in the situation of the narrator's culture, an analogue of our own relationship to our cultural predecessors—that we take the deception to be true in the story. In such a case, the inverse of the scenario bruited by Currie obtains: one who misses the 'symbolic or metaphysical content' of the work is likely to go wrong in arriving at an understanding of what is true in the story.¹⁷

Let me expand a little on these claims, and relate them to another central feature of Currie's analysis of fiction. As we have seen, Currie holds that the fictional status of a text stems from its provenance, as the product of an illocutionary act of 'fiction-making'. He claims, however, that such an analysis fails to provide a sufficient condition for the fictionality of a text: it is also necessary, he maintains, that, if the narrated events are in fact true, they are at most 'accidentally true', where this is a matter of their not displaying 'counter-factual dependence' on the actual events to which they correspond. This seems to rule out (and Currie's discussion suggests that it is *meant* to rule out) as 'fictional' a text whose utterer A truly believes that the narrated events fully correspond to an actual sequence of events.

I think, however, that such a text *could* be legitimately classified as fiction. For the intuition underlying Currie's further necessary condition of fictionhood is best accommodated by a fuller specification of the constraints under which narrative construction takes place in genuine illocutionary acts of fiction-making. We can approach such a fuller specification by asking what is involved in *reading* a text as fiction. Suppose a text T narrates a particular sequence of events. As a reader I may ask, 'why *those* events in *that* order?' In asking that question, I posit a choice, whose product is the sequence of events narrated in the text, where this choice is presumably governed by certain constraints. To treat the text as non-fiction is, at least in part, to take certain facts, or presumed facts, about how events transpired independently of the generation of T as constraining possible selections and orderings of *all* the events narrated in T. If, on the other hand, I treat the text as fiction, I assume that no such constraint governed the choices made in generating the text.

Suppose we conjoin this idea—that fiction-making involves narrative choices made under certain kinds of constraints—with Currie's idea that something is a work of fiction in so far as it is the product of an act of fiction-making. On the resulting view, the fictionality of a text generated with the intention that receivers 'make believe' the narrated events depends neither on (i) whether the narrated events correspond to some actual sequence of events, nor on (ii) whether the utterer of the text knows of, or is unconsciously guided by, the actual sequence of events in question; it depends, rather, on (iii) whether correspondence with the manner in which events actually transpired was taken, by the utterer, to be a constraint that the ordering of events in *T* must satisfy. This allows an utterer to select, as the narrative content of her story, a sequence of events she knows or believes to have actually occurred, as long as it is the satisfaction of some *other* constraint—term this *C-I*—by this sequence of events that governs her choice. Currie's 'counter-factual dependence' principle is upheld, for if actual events had transpired differently, then the narrative would have been correspondingly different only if *that* sequence of events also satisfied *C-I*.

How does this bear on the issue of truth in a story? In the first place, the constraints that operate in the narrative choices made by the utterer of a fictional text are a function of the utterer's *purpose(s)* in engaging in a given act of fiction-making. In the case of much 'non-serious' fiction, the purpose(s) may be simply to entertain, or to tell 'a good yarn', or perhaps to realize some moral, political, or rhetorical end—bringing about catharsis, raising political consciousness, or placating a tired child at bedtime. In most such cases, fully appreciating the *story* does not require that one grasps the utterer's purposes. It may, however, be a necessary condition for a literary text to count as 'serious fiction' that a reader who has *not* enquired as to the *point* of this story being told in this way can be held to have failed to exercise a properly responsible attitude towards the work instantiated in the text. Here, as the examples offered in section IV above show, grasping the point of the story may have a crucial bearing on one's correctly determining what is *true* in the story. However, as the hypothetical example sketched in section V suggests, an author's purposes do not *by themselves* determine what is true in her story. The author can indeed invite the reader to make believe that *P*, but the reader, while recognizing the invitation and being generally willing to engage in a game of make-believe with the author's text, can decline this invitation. Here, as elsewhere, it takes two to tango.

The inferences of the informed reader engaged in a game of make-believe with a particular text address what are taken to be the fruits of an intentional act of fiction-making on the part of the person who uttered the text. The reader posits certain constraints governing the narrative choices made by the utterer, and, to the extent that she treats the text as 'serious fiction', she posits these constraints by reference to a purpose ascribed to the author in telling

this story in *this* way. As a result, determining what the fictional author believes, or what the real author invites us to make-believe, may require a prior determination as to what the real author wants us to *believe*. If, as I have suggested, this is the case for much 'serious' fiction, then the appropriate conclusion to draw is that, contrary to the observations with which I opened this paper, the issues of 'truth *in* fiction' and 'truth *through* fiction' are *not* as distinct as some would have us believe.

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REFERENCES

- ¹ Gregory Currie, *The Nature of Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1990), pp. 70–1. All references in the text are to this work.
- ² This is roughly equivalent to David Lewis' 'Analysis 0'. See p. 268 of 'Truth in Fiction', reprinted in Lewis' *Philosophical Papers*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 1983).
- ³ This qualification is necessary if the 'content' of expressions occurring in direct or indirect quotation in a text is to be excluded from what is 'explicitly stated' in the text. I shall not attempt, here, to provide a more precise characterization of the notion of a 'proper part' of a text, or of the derivative notion of what is 'explicitly stated' in a text. I assume that nothing in the sequel requires that such characterizations be provided. Currie, we might note, operates with an unexplicated notion of the 'explicit content' of a fictional text—see, for example, Currie, p. 60.
- ⁴ See, for example, Currie, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
- ⁵ It might be argued that there is no clear distinction between (iii) and (iv), on the grounds that conversational implicatures, and the contribution of tropological uses of language to what is true in a story, depend not only on general interpretative principles such as those described by Grice, but also upon the background assumptions of the interpreter. To the extent that these assumptions are not themselves explicitly true in the story, the truths that I term 'non-explicitly true by direct implication' will depend upon the non-explicit background assumptions cited in (iv). I grant this point, but think it is valuable to distinguish (iii) and (iv) as distinct *problems* for a theory of fictional truth, even if the problems do not correspond to two mutually exclusive classes of fictional truths. The *problems* are importantly distinct, because, as I point out, a solution to the problem identified under (iii) may be furnished by more general work in pragmatics—one may determine what is 'non-explicitly true by direct implication' by applying general interpretative principles to what is explicitly stated in the text in the light of whatever background assumptions are appropriate. The problem identified under (iv), however, of determining what background assumptions are appropriate to the understanding of a fictional text, is specific to a theory of fiction.
- ⁶ A similar problem arises for Lewis' proposal, discussed below, that we explicate fictional truth in terms of counter-factual situations in which the story is told as known fact: where a story is told with a general tone of understatement or irony, we presumably want our account of fictional truth to reflect this. But this means that 'we would have to make prior decisions about what is true in the story in order to see where the text is unreliable. But in that case what is true in the story is already playing a role in determining what worlds are worlds of the story.' (p. 70)
- ⁷ This proposal—that P is true in a story S

just in case it is true in every S-world—is flawed in two different respects. First, it allows, as non-explicit truths, only (i) very general propositions true in every S-world and (ii) propositions non-explicitly true by direct implication in every S-world. Second, in assuming that the entire text is ‘uttered as known fact’, it equates what is *explicitly* true in the story with what is explicitly stated in the text. The more sophisticated versions of the S-world account of fictional truth outlined below speak to the first of these difficulties, but inherit the second.

⁸ Or non-explicitly true by direct implication. I ignore this complication in the ensuing discussion. Note, however, that if, as suggested in reference 5 above, what is non-explicitly true by direct implication may itself depend upon non-explicit ‘background assumptions’, such attempts to explicate fictional truth by appeal to a class of S-worlds look dangerously circular.

⁹ This problem is most acute when what is true, or what we believe to be true, diverges radically from what is believed to be true in the historico-cultural context in which a work was generated. See Currie, *op. cit.*, p. 66, for examples of this problem. In the same vein, Lewis’ ‘*Threepenny Opera*’ example (Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 274) suggests that general propositions concerning human psychology might be true in a story even though such propositions are neither (i) true in the actual world, or believed by us to be true in the actual world, nor (ii) *explicitly* true in the story.

¹⁰ Russell Hoban, *Riddley Walker* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1980).

¹¹ Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, trans. G. Rabassa (New York: HarperCollins, 1970).

¹² This is to bring against Currie’s account an objection similar to one that he brings against Lewis—see the passage cited in reference 6 above.

¹³ Alex Byrne, ‘Truth in Fiction: The Story Continued’, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 71 (1993), pp. 24–35. Byrne’s proposal is formulated in terms of technical devices that he labels ‘the Reader’ and ‘the Author’. While I cannot argue this

point here, I believe that the device of ‘the Author’ is an unnecessary complication in Byrne’s analysis, and that his proposal is in fact co-extensive with the proposal discussed in the text and thus vulnerable to the sort of counter-example developed below.

¹⁴ It should not be assumed, we might note, that the Reader of S is to be identified with the author’s *intended* reader. See Byrne, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

¹⁵ It is more difficult than one might suppose to come up with a generally persuasive counter-example to the proposed account, because the most obvious candidates are vulnerable to the sort of non-standard semantic theory currently proposed by Davidson (see, for example, ‘A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs’, in Ernest Lepore (ed.) *Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 433–46).

¹⁶ This complies with Byrne’s own characterization of the cognitive resources ascribable to ‘the Reader’.

¹⁷ For an interesting and related critical discussion of the place that readers’ attempts to arrive at an overall interpretation of a literary work play in the determination of what is true in a story, see Peter Lamarque, ‘Reasoning to What is True in Fiction’, *Argumentation*, Vol. 4 (1990), pp. 333–46. Lamarque, in a critical response to Lewis, argues for the essentially interpretative nature of our reasoning about the content of fiction, as a process whereby ‘a reader construct[s] a world by construing (the meaning of) a text.’ I am generally very sympathetic to Lamarque’s position. I believe that I disagree with him, however, in holding that the purposiveness we ascribe to a fictional text, in our attempts to interpret it, is rightly referred to a historically situated act of generation. In defending such a view of intentional interpretation, I would appeal to the sort of model of ‘inferential criticism’ defended by Michael Baxandall in his *Patterns of Intention* (New Haven: Yale U. P., 1985), especially chapter 2. Such a model allows us to relate the ‘intentionality’ of a work to an act of generation without falling foul of traditional

structures on critical appeals to 'the artist's intentions'. Lamarque, on the other hand, endorses Peter Jones' notion of 'creative interpretation' (see Jones, *Philosophy and the Novel* [Oxford: Oxford U. P., 1975]).

¹⁸ I wish to thank Paisley Livingston and Paul Pietroski for helpful discussions of these matters, and Peter Lamarque for very useful suggestions on earlier drafts of this paper.

KANT'S ASSESSMENT OF MUSIC IN THE *CRITIQUE OF JUDGMENT*

Martin Weatherston

IN HIS *Critique of Judgment*, Kant assesses the various arts as to their worth. In this ranking of the arts, music gets a very low rating, apparently below even the telling of jokes. This essay will attempt to show the steps by which Kant arrives at his low estimation of music.

The most crucial distinction to be made in assessing the arts is that between the agreeable and the beautiful. We can judge an object as regards the pleasure it gives us on two grounds. On the one hand, we can merely respond to the effect of the sensation occasioned by the object. A judgement directly upon sense assesses the object as to its *agreeableness*, and the pleasure it gives is called *enjoyment* [§3 (205)].¹ However, the pleasure derived from agreeable sensation is entirely contingent upon one's personal inclinations. It can by no means be attributed with any necessity to others [§7 (212)]. On the other hand, we can abstract from the matter of sensation, and attend merely to the form it presents to our understanding. If we thus put aside all the charms of the matter of sensation, and reflect on the form alone, we are taking pleasure in beauty. The pleasure taken in beauty is thus dependent not on mere sense, but on the conditions for cognition.

Now that the distinction between what is agreeable or charming and what is beautiful has been clarified, we are in a position to ask whether music can be a beautiful art. This question raises many difficulties. Although Kant does allow for beauty in music, we shall see that music has a very uncertain hold on its place as a beautiful art. This distinctive place of music in Kant's philosophy has been noted by Arden Reed:

Music is in some way undecidable, situated in the gap between the beautiful and the agreeable, and confounding the distinction between form and content.²

Reed is right to point out that the position of music in Kant's philosophy is complex, although in calling music's place 'undecidable' he is being too sceptical. Although Kant is far from clear on music's position among the arts, his views can be determined.

The question of beauty in music, and similarly in the art of colour, is much more difficult to determine than with the other arts. The formative arts provide a clearly defined figure, which obviously is apprehended as a form. Poetry calls attention to the interrelationships of its linguistic components, and thus directs attention away from the mere sensuousness of speech. Music and colour are not so clearly formal. Neither present the kind of form familiar to us from cognition, so the question must be asked: Do they present a form at all? Do they not rather invite us to revel in sensation?

Although colours and tones can always appeal through their sensuousness, Kant held that there is an element in both colour and tone which can be called beautiful, namely their *purity* [§14 (224)].³ Thus, colours and tones in themselves can be beautiful in so far as they are pure. For Kant, a pure colour or tone is one that can be apprehended uniformly [§14 (224)]. Thus, the beauty of a colour or tone lies in the formal quality of its apprehension, and this apprehension should not be disturbed by sensuous elements which would disturb it.

However beautiful tones or colours may be in themselves, they are not to be considered as an addition to the beautiful object that they serve to enhance. This would be to treat them as agreeable additions to beauty, which is clearly illegitimate. In the play of tones, it is not the beauty of the individual pure tones that matters, but rather their *composition*. The beauty of tones must be decided separately from the beauty of the composition that employs them [§14 (225-6)]. Thus, when judging a composition, the beauty of tone must be set aside, just as if it were a charm, so that the judgement upon the form of the composition may be pure. The advantage of beauty over charm lies in that beautiful tones, as pure tones, make for greater clarity in the composition.

In order to further our examination of music, the distinction between *free* and *adherent* beauty should be made clear. A free judgement of taste is what we have considered so far: the object is considered apart from its charms, and the judgement is not dependent upon any concept of what the thing is to be. A judgement on adherent beauty is likewise free from the merely agreeable, but it presupposes a *concept* of the purpose of the object, and the *perfection* of the object according to that purpose [§16 (229)]. This concept of perfection is itself complex, in that it expresses a relation between the cognition of the art work as an object and its purpose [§48 (311)]. The concept of perfection expresses a relation between the way we cognize the object (and the consequent harmony of our faculties) and the purpose of the art object.⁴

In describing the judgements that we make upon art objects, Kant develops the notion of an *aesthetic idea*. An aesthetic idea is a representation which enlivens thought through its rich associations [§49 (314)]. It is this aesthetic idea which allows the art work to express moral ideas. The rich associations of an aesthetic idea make it seem as if it is reaching beyond experience, just

as rational ideas do. If we connect an aesthetic idea to a rational idea, the unboundedness of the aesthetic idea acts as a symbol for the unboundedness of the rational idea, and thus our rational capacity is enlivened by this seeming appearance of the rational in sense experience [§49 (314-15)].

This is the full significance of Kant's discussion of the 'purpose' of an art work: both the moral concept which the work expresses and the concept by which the object is cognized come into our judgement. Through this connection of an aesthetic idea to a rational idea, imagination and reason are seen in harmony, and the whole of our mental powers is improved thereby. Therefore, while a pure and free judgement of taste merely assesses the harmony of the imagination and the understanding, judgement upon adherent beauty *further*s the culture of the mental powers [§44 (306)]. Therefore, we are not to consider adherent beauty as being in any way inferior to free beauty. Indeed, the advantage of adherent beauty lies in having been *fixed* through a concept of purpose. By bringing a concept of reason into harmony with taste, our faculty of the representative power gains [§17 (233)].

The connection of a rational idea with an aesthetic idea is of the utmost importance in assessing the value of an art form. The true worth of the aesthetic experience is the aid it gives to morality [§60 (356)]. Taste is thus at its best when it clearly expresses moral ideas. Without a connection to morality, art will tend to be appreciated as a mere enjoyment. Through being fixed to a moral concept, aesthetic appreciation is harmonized with reason, so that all our faculties gain [§52 (326)]. For Kant, taste enters its true vocation when it is fixed by a moral concept.

From this we can see that free beauty is ultimately of lower value than adherent beauty, since it is connected to no concept. In this aspect music is similar to parrots, sea-shells and wallpaper, all of which are free beauties [§16 (229)]. We can now see the full import of Kant's classification of music as a free beauty. Even though pure tones are beautiful, because their beauty is free and fixed to no moral idea, the appreciation of the beauty of music can *lapse* into mere enjoyment of its charms.

Kant attempts to justify this classification of music as a free beauty through examining music in relation to the other arts. As a preliminary to his evaluation of the arts, Kant attempts a classification of them on the analogy of speech. He reminds us initially that while beauty in general is the expression of aesthetic ideas, in beautiful art this idea must be occasioned by the concept of the object [§51 (320)].

Kant offers his classification of the arts as a merely tentative scheme. We will see that although this classification will bolster Kant's low opinion of music, it is the analysis of how music is cognized that is the fundamental ground for this opinion. Kant divides the arts into three categories which are based on the way in which men express themselves through speech. Firstly, there is *word*, which expresses *thought*. The arts of speech are poetry and

rhetoric. Secondly, there is *deportment*, or gesticulation, which expresses *intuition*. These are the formative arts, such as painting, sculpture, architecture and landscape gardening. Thirdly, there are the arts of *tone*, or modulation, which express *sensation*. These arts include music and coloration [§51 (320–5)].

Kant's discussion of music in this section has some peculiarities which are initially puzzling. Once again he raises the issue of whether music is a beautiful art, but does so without reference to his earlier distinction between pure and impure tones. Some of the oddness of this omission may be dispelled if we remember that this section is concerned with the arts as expressing aesthetic ideas through the concept of the object. Pure tones, which in themselves would be free beauties, and thus lacking concepts, would not strictly come into the discussion.

Kant says that the arts of tone are concerned with the differing degrees of the tension of the sense to which the sensation belongs [§51 (324)]. The curious thing about the arts of tone is that they depend upon a sensibility which seems to be unnecessary for cognition. Thus, a man can be colour-blind or tone-deaf, and still see as sharply or hear as distinctly as one who is not lacking these susceptibilities. Kant holds that sensitivity to colour or to tone is useful only for aesthetic appreciation and not useful for the cognition of the objects of nature in any other aspect (although we could certainly quibble here in the case of colour at least). The fact that these susceptibilities are not cognitive makes it an open question about whether they can be formal. We know that ordinary sensation, which is not itself formal, can be apprehended in a concept of the object, and thus formally, but what about non-cognitive sensations?

Kant is not here disputing that there is a formal element in the apprehension of individual tones, but is rather discussing the possibility of apprehending form in a composition. This may be seen in the sentences which conclude the section:

... we would declare music either ... to be the *beautiful* [schön] play of sensations (of hearing), or [to be the play] of *agreeable* sensations. Only under the first kind of explication will music be presented wholly as fine [schön] art, while under the second it would be presented (at least in part) as an *agreeable* art. [§51 (325)]

This quotation is indeed ambiguous in that Kant contrasts the explanation of music as a beautiful play of sensations with music as a play of *agreeable* sensations, and not, as might be expected, as an *agreeable* play of (beautiful) sensations. However, given that Kant has allowed that pure tones can be beautiful in themselves, we can conclude that the issue is not simply whether music is beautiful or agreeable, but whether it is wholly beautiful or partly agreeable.

The issue discussed in this section is thus whether or not the form of a musical composition is what is appreciated in music, or in other words,

whether we appreciate music as a beautiful formal structure. This may seem odd, given that Kant has already declared that the beauty of music must lie in its composition [§14 (225-6)], and would thus seem to have implied that the apprehension of this form is possible. Since Kant does go on to deny that music is a beautiful art, it would seem that he is thereby disputing our ability to appreciate the form of a musical composition.

In order to solve the question of whether music is a beautiful art, Kant presents a physiological discussion of the possibility of apprehending form in music. On the one hand, since we cannot perceive the time interval between the vibrations which make up tones, these must be perceived merely as an effect, which would provide no structural foundation for composition. On the other hand, those who are not tone-deaf can perceive a definite quality in tones that is fixed by intelligible differences. These intelligible differences could be the means by which musical form could be created and apprehended [§51 (325)].

Kant leaves this dilemma open, but as we shall see, he goes on to treat music as a largely agreeable art, and indeed seems to accept the first alternative that tones are appreciated as a mere effect. Though this failure to announce his preference is rather lax of Kant, I think we can see a possible reason why his decision seemed inevitable to him. For Kant, intelligible differences in tones would have to be based on a perceived quality which was not merely of the degree of sensation [§51 (325)]. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant shows that with the categories of quality we apprehend by means of *intensive magnitude*, that is, *degree*.⁵ If these intelligible differences in tones and colours are not perceived through the degree of sensation, nor as a series of distinct vibrations (thus employing the categories of quantity), then the differences in tones are not perceived as being directly based upon the formal relations of the universal conditions of human experience, that is, the categories, such as they are required for the cognition of an object by any man. The differences in tones would presumably be apprehended by a much more complex and derivative synthesis. Since Kant has claimed that the arts of tone 'are concerned with nothing else than the proportion of the different degrees of the disposition (tension) of the sense to which the sensation belongs' [§51 (324)], these intelligible differences must then be bound up with the specific characteristics of the ear, which can, of course, differ widely between individuals. These 'intelligible differences' would thus reduce to a mere effect, which cannot serve as the basis for composition.

If Kant reasoned in this way, he must have been sceptical about the possibility of the perception of form through non-cognitive sensations such as colour and pitch because such a form would not have been universally communicable. If some people are indeed tone-deaf, it may be the case that many other people are tone-deaf to varying degrees. Since these sensations are not essential

for the cognition of objects (according to Kant), there would be no reason why there should be an essential similarity in the way people hear tones, in contrast to the way people hear words or natural sounds. If tones are apprehensible in varying degrees and in differing ways, then universal communication cannot be based on them. The relations among tones might be heard as subjectively as the connections some people claim to perceive between colours and key signatures. This consideration would seem to show that musical composition is not apprehended formally.

Finally, and perhaps most tellingly, if tone and colour really are incidental to cognition, neither would be adequate as a basis for a concept of an object without the aid of other elements of cognition. If this is the case, then music can never supply a concept of what the object ought to be, and thus of the perfection of the object. Music cannot become an adherent beauty, and thus is in danger of sinking into a mere enjoyment.

The supposition that colour and tone are inessential for cognition provides us with many possible grounds for doubting the possibility of perceiving form in a musical composition. Whatever the opinion Kant may actually have held as to the reason for this, he does seem to think that the difference between tones is apprehended as a mere effect. These effects must necessarily be inadequate for providing a perceptible form, and thus musical composition fails to provide a cognitive concept. We can see in addition that he thought that music also fails to provide any moral concepts.

This failure is expounded in Kant's evaluation of the arts. Poetry is rated the highest of all the arts. It has the advantage of uniting explicit concepts of objects to explicit moral concepts, thus bringing all our faculties into harmony and enlivened activity [§53 (326)]. Poetry, since it tries to see nature in terms of moral ideas and makes this aim quite explicit, clearly leads the way in the cultivation of the mental powers.

The formative arts, and among them painting in particular, follow upon poetry in the cultivation of the faculties. The formative arts promote the harmony of our faculties by moving from concepts to sensation [§53, (330)] so that we may, for example, have a painting expressing heroism.

In the judgement of reason, music is far below these two. It is not initially clear, however, why painting can express moral ideas while music cannot. One reason for this may possibly be found in the way that beauty is a symbol for morality. Taste provides a symbol for morality in that it is free from mere sensibility and thus universal. If indeed, as Kant would seem to hold, music is not apprehended formally in its *composition*, but just in the purity of its tones, the freedom of the faculties is thus *limited*. Music would thus be inadequate to serve as a symbol for the unboundedness and the freedom from sensation of moral ideas. In other words, Kant seems to be holding that we must have apprehension of the large-scale form of an art work, as well as the small-scale

form of its components, if we are to see moral ideas in art. In contrast to music, the formative arts very obviously present large-scale forms, since we can see the whole complex image at once.

A further explanation might be found in Kant's classification of the arts on the analogy of speech. Although we can express our moral nature in words or action (deportment), in contrast sensation cannot express anything moral. Thus, poetry and the formative arts have a clear analogy to morality, while music does not. Indeed Kant does explain music as presenting a language of the *affects* (affections) [§53 (328)]. The affects have a very low moral worth [§29 (272)]. The affects expressed by music are, of course, not definite thoughts, and thus the combinations of tones, rather than expressing something rationally comprehensible, suggest merely an *unspeakable wealth of thought* without, however, anything being thought [§54 (329)].

In order to make this last claim as to the meaninglessness of music, Kant has to reject the possibility that one derives pleasure from the *composition* of music, that is, its *formal* structure. Music must be viewed as a series of pleasing tones. Kant does not deny that formal relations are an integral part of music [§53 (329)]. However, Kant intends to establish that while the effect of music is dependent upon the mathematical relationships of the tones, the appeal of music lies in the meaningless succession of intense and varied aesthetic ideas:

But mathematics certainly does not play the slightest part in the charm and mental agitation that music produces. Rather, it is only the indispensable condition (*conditio sine qua non*) of that ratio of the impressions, in their combination as well as change, which enables us to comprehend them . . . [§53 (329)]

Mathematics, indeed, acts as the *indispensable condition* of music, in that it prescribes certain rules for the combinations of tones that prevent displeasing results. Mathematical relations govern how tones may be combined in harmonies, and how they may succeed one another in melodies without causing displeasure. (Oddly, Kant does not seem to believe that the mathematical relations in melody could extend beyond the juxtaposition of any two notes.)

Music is in the peculiar position of depending upon formal considerations for its possibility as an art, while this form is not apprehended as such. Mathematics seems merely to be the mechanism for producing music, perhaps like proper grammar in poetry, or correct canvas-stretching and colour-mixing in painting. This mathematical form thus has no element of *play* about it, but is merely mechanical. Kant clearly believed that musicians intended only to provide enjoyment, and that they regarded the formal rules of their craft as mere rules of prudence, which were not to be used creatively.

Thus, although music moves the mind in a greater number of ways and more intensely than any other art, it has no connection to morality. It provides

enjoyment rather than cultivation, and so reason must ultimately be dissatisfied with it [§53 (328)]. Music is in the position of being a free beauty which, because it is not fixed to a concept, is appreciated as a mere enjoyment.

Music, like wit, gives gratification merely through its changes. Indeed, Kant says that music provides a merely bodily pleasure. The sensation of music excites aesthetic ideas of the affections, which then affect the body with redoubled force [§54 (332)]. The beauties of music are only a 'necessary vehicle' for pleasing sensations, and thus, Kant claims, music should be called a merely agreeable art rather than a beautiful art [§54 (332)].

To sum up: we can see that Kant holds that although music has an element of beauty which makes it universally communicable, we do not appreciate music as a beautiful play of sensations, that is, we do not appreciate the mathematical form of the composition. We merely apprehend a highly stimulating flow of unrelated, or loosely related, aesthetic ideas. Thus, although music is based on the beauty of tones, it is appreciated as a mere enjoyment. Its aesthetic ideas are not linked to rational ideas, and so it does not further our mental faculties, but merely stimulates the body.

Kant's analysis of music is clearly inadequate. His analysis moves from the initial transcendental analysis towards a conception of music that is increasingly both personal and implausible. His rejection of form and moral expression in music is unsatisfactory for the Baroque music of his youth, which showed a great interest in exploiting the formal aspect of music through polyphonic writing; for Classical music, which depends on the apprehension of long-term harmonic and thematic relationships; and for the Romantic music that was beginning at the time of the writing of the *Critique of Judgment*, since Romantic music explicitly attempted to express moral ideas through purely musical means.

It is in the question of the apprehension of form in a musical composition where we can see the inadequacy of Kant's position most glaringly. While Kant has tried to cast doubt on the possibility of apprehending form in a musical composition, nevertheless he has to admit that formal, mathematical relations are an integral part of music; yet he claims that these formal relations are not appreciated as such. Instead, pleasure in music comes from the succession of affects that the harmony and melody produce. Even the admission of the effects of melody is damaging to Kant's position. He seems to want to claim that in melody, mathematics governs only the *change* or *transition* of tones, so that displeasing juxtapositions may be avoided. If we can perceive formal relations over a stretch of time, as anyone who is not completely unmusical indeed can, we have a clear case for music being a beautiful art.

The real culprit in Kant's analysis of music is his inability to explain apprehension of tones and the forms built upon them in a way that he did not find absurd. We can see, though, that this difficulty is occasioned by Kant's rather crude understanding of the components of music. We find, for instance, that

Kant makes no mention of *rhythm*. Rhythm clearly presents a regular structure through which formal relations can be presented.

Furthermore, Kant understands individual notes in terms of the ambiguous term 'tone'. If Kant had analysed tone into *pitch* and *timbre*, he would have found it much easier to see how musical forms are cognized, and he would not have been so ready to equate tones and colours. The pitch of any note in a musical composition is meaningful only in relation to the other notes of the composition. By the interrelation of pitches within a composition, a composer is able to create clear formal structures. The importance of this in composition can be seen in the fact that when the actual pitches of a composition are changed while leaving the relationships intact (transposition), we still have the same piece of music. Furthermore, the timbres of that composition can be changed by assigning the notes to different instruments, while still leaving substantially the same piece of music. These considerations thus indicate that it is not 'tones' but timbres (aptly called tone-colours) that are equivalent to colours in that they make the form more intuitable and in incidentally adding charms.

But Kant saw no need for a more careful analysis. His own inability to appreciate form in music is shown by his revealing claim that it is usually impossible to remember music shortly after one has heard it. For Kant, musical impressions, rather than being capable of being retained to our lasting pleasure, 'either are extinguished entirely or, if the imagination involuntarily repeats them, they are more likely to be irksome to us than agreeable' [§53 (330)]. Furthermore, music lacks *urbanity*, in that one may be disturbed by music made by other people.⁶ Thus, it would seem that Kant allowed his lack of appreciation (and perhaps even dislike) of music to blind him to the need for more careful thinking. In short, Kant's assessment of music is a blot on an otherwise profound analysis of aesthetic experience.

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- ¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987); references to this edition give the section number and the Akademie pagination given in the margins.
- ² Arden Reed, 'The Debt of Disinterest: Kant's Critique of Music', *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. 95 (1980), p. 569. Donald W. Crawford also holds that the position of music cannot be decided. See his *Kant's Aesthetic Theory* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1974), pp. 106–10.
- ³ There is a textual ambiguity here. Given the context I believe Kant to be holding (in agreement with Euler) that form is perceptible in pure colours and tones (reading *nicht zweifle* of the third edition, rather than the *sehr zweifle* of the first two editions). See Theodore Uehling's more thorough defence of this interpretation in *The Notion of Form*.

in *Kant's Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), pp. 24–6, and Werner S. Pluhar's note on this in his translation of the *Critique of Judgment* [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987].

- ⁴ Kant's use of the term 'concept' in this work could cause confusion, particularly when he says that apprehension of free beauties does not involve concepts [§5 (209)]. I take it that since aesthetic experience involves the play of the imagination, and the synthesis of imagination is always subject to the categories (*Critique of Pure Reason*, B 160–1),

categories are taken for granted throughout the *Critique of Judgment*. 'Concept' is thus used solely to refer to empirical concepts or ideas, and never to categories.

- ⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St Martin's Press, 1929), A 166, B 207.
- ⁶ Kant was apparently much disturbed by the hymn-singing of prisoners in a near-by jail. See Werner S. Pluhar's note (p. 200) in his translation of the *Critique of Judgment* [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987].

THE STUPA IN INDIAN ART: SYMBOLS AND THE SYMBOLIC

Jane Duran

WHEN ONE thinks of the art of India, one frequently imagines the impressive Hindu temples, such as those at Khajuraho and Konarak, or perhaps the miniatures of Mughal art. Yet there is a tradition in Indian art that predates either of these and is directly connected to—at the very least—elements of the larger Hindu tradition. That is the Buddhist enterprise of stupa or reliquary construction, and the importance of the stupa in the history of the art of the Indian subcontinent cannot be overestimated.¹

The stupa is of more than mere historical import, because the stupa itself embodies components susceptible to analysis along lines of great interest to analytic aesthetics. Contemporary analytic aesthetics has often tried to deal, and not always successfully, with questions involving symbols or symbolism. To what extent can a sign serve as a symbol of something if it is connected in the imagination with some other object or event? Is it possible for an entire work of art to serve as a symbol? Does the notion that something successfully serves as a symbol imply that it must have some conventional relation to that which it symbolizes?

The Buddhist stupa is typically a large mound covering an interment of bones or other relics of a bodhisattva or Buddhist saint. Its ground-plan mirrors the notion of the mandala, or symbol of the cosmos, and its apex is supposed to be constructed in accordance with some concept of the cosmic axis.² The stupa is itself symbol and symbolic, redolent of a Buddhist/Hindu worldview that may be difficult to articulate in Western terms. In this paper I will attempt to illuminate certain areas of contemporary theory with regard to the notion of the symbolic in terms of information provided to us by the construction of these Buddhist monuments.

I

The levels of symbolism inherent in the stupa, as standardly constructed, are complex and intricate. Rowland notes, of the stupas of the Sunga period (185–72 BC):

[T]he architecture of the surrounding railing and the actual ritual of veneration may be traced to pre-Buddhist solar cults. The ground-plan of the railing, with

the gateways at the four points of the compass describing the revolving claws of a swastika, is no accident, but a purposeful incorporation of one of the most ancient [cosmic] symbols . . . The practical function of the railing or vedika was to separate the sacred precinct from the secular world.³

Here the art historian is telling us that the very ground-plan of the stupa—let alone its other parts—is based on the symbolism of the cosmic structure. Rowland claims that the walk around the grounds mirrors the course of the sun in the heavens, and also the Buddha's life; the guardrails symbolize the demarcation between the sacred and the profane. In short (and this is merely a portion of a lengthy description of stupa plans given by Rowland preparatory to an even more detailed description of the Bharhut stupa), virtually every aspect of the physical stupa, its plan and its geometrical precision has symbolic value.

But what does it mean to make such an assertion? A great deal of the contemporary commentary on the notion of symbolism reminds us of the need for conventionality, some sort of understood relationship, between the symbol and the thing symbolized. As one contemporary analytic philosopher notes, 'A symbol serves to transfer someone's thought to something other than itself, and the transfer is not a random association.'⁴ Does it make sense to foster the claim that the ground-plan of the stupa is symbolic when such symbolism might very well have failed for a great majority of those living at the time? We can hypothesize that literacy and acquaintance with the more ramified parts of the Buddhist tradition would have a great bearing on a supplicant's ability to make the relevant associations, and there is no reason to believe that many would have been so able.

Clearly, our notion of the symbolic is in need of elucidation. When the association is stretched to the point of vacuity, one is tempted to say that symbolism obviously fails, but a case like that of the Sunga stupa does not seem to fall neatly into such a category. Perhaps further contemporary work on the notion of the symbolic can be of help here.

II

Susanne Langer's work on symbol has the importance that it does largely because of its thoroughness and detail. We can already sense that no simple-minded formulation of the notion *symbol* can possibly do the topic justice; fortunately, Langer eschews such simplification in her work and, in so doing, helps us with the use of the notion of symbol in other cultural contexts. She writes:

Before a symbolic form is put to public religious use—before it serves the difficult art of presenting really profound ideas—it has probably had a long career in a much homelier capacity. Long before men perform *rites* which enact the phases of life, they have learned such acting in *play*. And the play of children is very

instructive if we would observe the peculiarly intellectual (non-practical) nature of gesture.⁵

Here Langer reminds us that the source of much of what is profound about rite is not only found in the chronology of the culture, but also in the chronology of the individual. Mimicry and the notion of acting out are of crucial importance and may very well have a great deal to do with the rite that is eventually established.

We can discern two levels of analysis, then, for the notion that the stupas themselves serve as symbols. A prosaic gloss on this notion—that the ground-plan itself has the structure of a mandala, or constitutes an 'architectural yantra', as some have said⁶—represents only one level of categorization. Still another level has to do with the notion that circumambulation of the stupa is itself part of a rite, and that the rite in question is rooted in imitative play. Here we can see these two levels reinforce each other, as it were: some of the less overtly ritualistic aspects of the stupa may still be related to this notion of mimetic play, and some of the more blatantly ritualistic aspects of its construction must, perforce, be relevant to the notion of symbol in the sense of *sign*. Langer herself captures this part of the concept of the symbol when she writes that 'instead of completing the natural history of a feeling, it [the symbol] denotes the feeling, and may merely bring it to mind . . .'⁷

A Langerian analysis is particularly instructive to us here because of the simultaneous breadth and depth that Langer brings to the topic. Nevertheless, other crucial sorts of questions about the role of symbol in a cultural artefact of such complexity as the stupa remain. There are still several urgent questions, articulated previously, about the role of the knower and the symbol and about the role of acquaintance-with-the-symbol. In order for there to be a coherent overarching concept of the symbolic, there must be some sense in which the statement that the cross is the symbol of Christianity is on a par with, or reminiscent of, our statement that the plan of the reliquary is a symbol of the cosmos in the Buddhist tradition. In the first instance, the symbol derives part of its potency, presumably, from constant use and association. These are aspects of the symbolic that must be investigated.

III

With regard to the notion of convention and the symbolic, Meeson has noted that:

[A]s initial experience hardens through conventional usage into stylistic mannerism where a familiar symbolic interpretation is both encouraged and anticipated, when meaning begins to take on a firmer semantic structure and when interpretation against a known intention on the part of the artist takes over from response rooted in the immediacy of sensation itself . . . at this point those feelings of

wonder and delight which accompany the aesthetic tend to give way to . . . familiarity.⁸

At first blush this problem would seem not to accrue to the sort of religious monument with which we are here concerned, since it seems to be an obvious delineation of the overt in the Western symbolic tradition. But the very fact that Meeson brings up this difficulty reminds us of an assertion that he seems to take for granted, and to which I alluded in the previous section: that the notion of the symbolic is closely related to the notion of the conventional. There is a certain sense in which it is oxymoronic to speak of non-conventional symbols, and to try to make out a case for, say, the ground-plan of a stupa, would seem to be to fall into this very trap.

Now it is here that information on standard symbols within the Hindu and Buddhist tradition can be of the most help, because although we might hypothesize that the use of these symbols is somewhat less heavily conventionalized than the use of religious symbols in the West (for a variety of reasons) we would still expect to be able to give some account of the use of the symbols that helps flesh out our view of what it means to say that a stupa is symbolic.

A number of commentators seem to be under the impression that the geometricity of the stupa plan is a sort of mandala, or a specialized sort of yantra. Within the Hindu tradition a yantra is the symbolic manifestation of the divine or cosmic, much as the mantra is its aural manifestation. The notion of a mandala is well-established within the Hindu/Buddhist tradition, and carries over into other cultural manifestations of the tradition, such as Tibetan Buddhism. There is a high degree of conventionality to such works, and they are recognizable as geometric patterns on a ground sometimes embellished with the figures of minor deities.⁹ In fact, one commentator goes so far as to refer to the stupas as 'stone mandalas' or 'architectural yantras'. As Khanna notes with regard to an Indonesian stupa,

The Sri Yantra is essentially three-dimensional, like a terraced mountain, and both yantra and stupa represent the cosmological scheme of the mythical 'world mountain', Mount Meru. As [has been demonstrated in the study of Borobudur], the internal design of the temple can best be understood through the Sri Yantra.¹⁰

Here the commentator makes a direct appeal to the notion of a holy yantra in order to try to make the format of a stupa more comprehensible to Westerners (interestingly enough, the text itself is on yantras).

A strong argument can be made, then, that the stupa and its plan are symbolic on more than one level. The more flat-footed and somewhat less sophisticated level is perhaps best thought of as akin to iconic symbolism. The other levels discussed in the previous section are clearly more evocative of the notions of rite and myth. That an icon can penetrate all of these levels is

intriguing, and the notion that conventionality might possess gradations is also one worthy of investigation.

IV

Our preliminary view of the symbolism of the stupa, then, is that it lacks the rigid conventionality of many symbols that might commonly be employed in Western art, but that we can make sense of the notion that it is symbolic by using the rather free-flowing notion of a yantra, specifically that of a mandala, as the basis for our contention. European art or worship has no comparable category—in general, it seems fair to say that the iconicity of most symbols in Western art is more pronounced, and that the template-like notion of the yantra has no real Western counterpart (particularly in religious terms).

At an earlier point in the paper I cited Dickie on symbolism; Dickie also notes that:

In general, it takes both formal devices and a thing with appropriate characteristics to establish that thing or make it function as a symbol . . . Symbols are context dependent.¹¹

Although it might at first appear that this definition, too, renders the notion of the stupa as symbol somewhat problematic, the merging of our two major lines of analysis here—one drawn from the European aesthetic tradition and the other from the Hindu/Buddhist worship tradition—intersects rather nicely, I claim, with Dickie's point. Although Dickie wrote this passage in the middle of a longer one containing a set of claims about iconicity, the relevant phrase is 'context dependent'. The context here is, in fact, Buddhist worship. In the freer, less formalized structure of a set of conventions with no rigid hierarchy and a less stated line of authority, one might reasonably argue that if the relevant Buddhist laypersons are familiar with the conventions of the yantra or mandala and see the stupa as (in Khanna's words) an 'architectural mandala', then the requisite linkage has been made.

This rather limited approach serves to drive home the notion that a context may be narrowly defined for these purposes. In addition, we may suppose that even within a given circle of Buddhist acolytes, some would have been more familiar with the portions of this convention than others, so the context may be an extremely narrow one. But surely the size of the context does not, alone, reflect on the value of the symbol employed, or the extent to which that symbol may be seen as more or less successful. For many non-Western traditions, a host of associations come into play; these may be linked to rite or imitation, as Langer suggests, and they may be relatively undefined except for a few individuals. Part of the difficulty with the Western notion of symbolic conventionality is that we seem to be articulating it, consciously or

unconsciously, in terms of numbers. We think of Western religious symbols as symbolic because we assume that they will be understood by many or most adults functioning within the culture. But a more finely grained notion of the symbolic does not demand that sort of connection.

In an extended analysis in a chapter of *Philosophy in a New Key* entitled 'Life-Symbols: the Root of Myth', Langer proposes a rather interesting switch on some notions of the symbolic and the mythical. Recounting a New Zealand Maori tale that uses the name 'Hina', meaning 'moon', for many of the female characters in the tale, Langer notes:

The mystery lightens when we consider that *Hina also means the moon*. In the various Hinas of Polynesian myth we have just so many stages of 'personification' of the moon, from the luminous, hollow woman on the horizon at the end of the shining path, to the mother who spends her nights with the children but goes down to the earth by day . . .

If the gods of mythology really arose by a process of 'personification', then Maui's mother who threw him away and later re-adopted him must be regarded as the end-result of a process beginning with a near animistic conception of the moon. But in view of the fairytale character of all primitive story . . . I believe the process of development to be exactly the contrary: Hina is not a symbol of the moon, but *the moon is a symbol of Hina, the woman*.¹²

Here Langer takes some time to make the valuable point that the symbolic stretches, as it were, in both directions. I believe that this point is applicable to many instances of symbolism, and it strikes me as being particularly apt for the case in point in this analysis. The looseness of the associations in the Indian tradition, and the regional variation in associations, virtually mandate that the linkage of the associations might move in both directions.¹³ Thus, not only is the stupa, in its framework, symbolic of the cosmos, but conceptualizations of the cosmos are symbolic of the stupa. The links here are made in either direction because the nature of the Buddha's life and the beliefs formed about it do not lend themselves to a standard sign/signified analysis.

V

I have written of two standard problems for interpretation of the symbolic, and have conceptualized about both problematic areas from the standpoint of the differences within the Indian cultural tradition. Narrowness of context—and assumed familiarity with context on the part of those who might have daily acquaintance with it, such as Buddhist acolytes—goes some way towards alleviating our sense that the symbolic must somehow coincide with the conventional. Still another sort of problem of symbolism, the notion that the fit between symbol and thing signified should at least be somewhat iconic, is rectified partially by allusion to the Langerian concept of two-way movement between the symbol and that which it signifies.

The stupa is such an important part of the Buddhist worldview that virtually no commentary on the sculpture or architecture of countries in which Buddhism remains strong can avoid noticing its ubiquity. Thus, we find our overall analysis of the import of the symbolic quality of the stupa undergirded by, for example, commentary that accompanied the recent exhibition of Indonesian art in Washington's National Gallery.¹⁴ It is noteworthy that the author of this piece seems to take it for granted that much of the conventionality of the stupa, its reliefs and its structure, is so ingrained in the local tradition as to not require extensive explication. Here is the commentary of Soekmono on Borobudur:

The most prominent structure dating from the reign of the Sailendra kings is Candi Borobudur. . . In terms of its shape and structure this sacred monument can hardly be called a *candi*, for it lacks its basic component, a cella to enshrine statuary. Borobudur has the shape of a stepped pyramid crowned by a stupa . . . The upper levels of Borobudur are quite different from other Candis because it has no roof . . . The element of decoration is provided by hollow stupas, arranged in circles of the three concentric terraces . . . The lower level [of Candi Borobudur] represents the *kamadhatu*, the Sphere of Desire . . . Above it lies the *rupadhatu*, the Sphere of Form . . .¹⁵

We can see from Soekmono's assessment of the Candi that major portions of what we have denoted as symbolic about the stupa have been taken for granted. This is particularly intriguing since part of the point of Soekmono's writings is to focus on the extent to which Indonesian temple construction might be thought to be an indigenous form. All of this underscores, of course, the notion that, with a stated framework, the concept of the stupa as symbol is understood, easily articulated, and—to some extent—expected.

VI

In this paper I have asked some difficult questions with regard to works in the Asian tradition and the extent to which we can elucidate their symbolic status by adverting to Western notions of symbol. I first pointed out that the notion that a Buddhist reliquary might, in large scale, serve as a symbol was somewhat difficult to accept, since our contemporary commentary on the symbolic suggests that symbols are heavily conventional. Both the time period and the level of literacy would have prevented, I suggested, the conventionalization of portions of the stupa in the same way that conventionalization was achieved for Christian symbols at a later point.

But I then alluded to other notions having to do with the symbolic that proved to be more fruitful. A Langerian analysis, in particular, I have argued, helps establish some conceptual framework within which to speculate about the importance of the stupa, seen as an Asian 'work of art' (and frequently so cited in the many texts on the art of India and Nepal). The notions of rite and

play, I claimed, are helpful, and at a later point I alluded to Langer's analysis of a Maori myth to aid in establishing the innovative notion that, for something as culturally laden as a reliquary, the notion of the symbolic works *both ways*. Perhaps more standardly, at least within the framework of the Hindu/Buddhist tradition, Khanna and other commentators have noted that the stupa plan has long been seen as an architectural yantra. This helps establish, to some degree, related notions of context and conventionality—although, as I indicated, one might hypothesize a rather restricted framework for such a context. Finally, the views of Dickie and Meeson, although they may point us in a certain direction, are helpful, I claimed, more for letting us know what the stupa is not. It does not make sense to say that the stupa is symbolic in the flatter, more fully iconic sense in which we so often use the term for European symbols, because our knowledge of the culture indicates that the relationships are more fluid.

To return to the quotation from Rowland with which I began the paper, Rowland had claimed with respect to the architectural structure of the stupa that "The practical function of the railing or vedika was to separate the sacred precinct from the secular world."¹⁶ Here, I think, we have hit upon the sort of construction to which Langer alludes, and which I have expanded upon at an earlier point. Structural plan and cosmic symbolism, sacred precinct and secular world—all of these concepts are interrelated and connected to each other historically in ways that would be difficult to articulate. It is part of the attraction of a site such as Bharhut, with its more standardly symbolic figures carved onto rails and niches, that it surprises and astonishes the Western observer. Perhaps what can most accurately be said about it is that the depth of its symbolism forces us to construe our notions of symbol and the symbolic in new and fertile ways.

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REFERENCES

- ¹ This is why, for example, it figures prominently in the work of art historians. See Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India* (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1967).
- ² Rowland, in op. cit., pp. 50–2.
- ³ Ibid., pp. 50–1.
- ⁴ George Dickie, *Aesthetics: An Introduction* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971), p. 124.
- ⁵ Susanne Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. P., 1976), p. 155.
- ⁶ Madhu Khanna, *Yantra* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), pp. 143–52.
- ⁷ Langer, in op. cit., p. 152.
- ⁸ Philip Meeson, 'Art as Symbol or Thing', in *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 25–6.
- ⁹ Khanna, *passim*.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., p. 148.
- ¹¹ Dickie, in op. cit., p. 127.

¹² Langer, in op. cit., p. 190

¹⁵ Catalog, pp 71-3

¹³ Rowland, *passim*.

¹⁶ Rowland, in op. cit., pp 50-1

¹⁴ Catalog, 'The Sculpture of Indonesia'
(Washington, DC National Gallery of Art,
1990).

BOOK REVIEWS

Institutions of Art: Reconstructions of George Dickie's Philosophy Edited by ROBERT J. YANAL. Pennsylvania State U P 1992. pp. 191. Paperbound, £14.95. *Danto and His Critics*. Edited by MARK ROLLINS. Blackwell. 1993. pp. 223. Paperbound, £14.99.

EACH OF these two volumes commemorates the work of a major contemporary aesthetician. Both aestheticians have been associated (at least in someone's mind) with institutional theories/accounts of art, and each volume contains a bibliography of the works of its subject. Further, there are topics and presenters in common between these volumes (Dickie writes in the one for Danto!). But there similarities end. For the Danto *Festschrift* is one of a series of parallel design and presentation, and includes replies by Danto. Also, although few of its eleven papers have *nothing* to say to the aesthetician, within them is included discussion of topics not of direct interest to readers of this journal, reflecting the variety of Danto's *oeuvre* (philosophies of mind, action and history, as well as philosophical method, occur here as well as mention of Danto's books on Nietzsche and Sartre). By contrast, Dickie's output (as represented by the bibliography) seems confined to aesthetics: certainly, the nine papers in the volume concentrate there. From among the assembled riches, here I can only consider briefly *some* of the interesting papers in each volume, focusing on similarities of theme.

The Dickie volume is organized in three sections, reconstructions (respectively) of the institutional theory, of the evaluation of art, and the history of aesthetics. From this last section, I would especially single out Peter Kivy's 'From literature as imagination to literature as memory', discussing (arguable) parallels between changes in the account offered for literature. The second section is concerned with themes from Dickie's *Evaluating Art* (Temple

University Press, 1988): in particular, with his matrix or 'grid' method for ranking/evaluating artworks. 'Once it is decided which particular aesthetic or cognitive properties [of the works of art] are to be assessed, Dickie proposes assigning numerical values to these properties in order to rank them' (p. 94). The results are then displayed in a grid.

The adequacy of this method is challenged here in two ways: first, Peggy Zeglin Brand ('Evaluating art: a feminist case for Dickie's matrix system') displays—through detailed consideration of two paintings—difficulties in taking seriously the outcomes of Dickie's methods if one is restricted to his categories. If this really is a case for Dickie's system, I should hate to read a case *against* it. Then, Marcia Muellder Eaton ('Evaluating more than art') considers how the system might be applied to 'landscape values' (p. 110). She concludes, charitably, 'a great deal of work remains to be done before Dickie's ranking method can get us to a public aesthetic policy' (p. 123).

Perhaps the most interesting paper in this volume is contributed by Noel Carroll ('Identifying art'). Writing '[a]s a student of George Dickie's' (p. 3), and accepting Dickie's points about 'the importance of social context for the prospect of identifying art' (p. 4), Carroll claims 'art is not identified by definitions, institutional or otherwise, but by narratives' (p. 4). The (psychological?) need for an identification of what is and what is not art is introduced. Here Carroll attributes to Stanley Cavell the recognition of 'the modern audience's fear that it might be the butt of a continuously floating confidence game' (p. 5). We should note, Carroll urges, that:

... the question 'What is art?' serves as an umbrella under which a series of questions might be advanced, including these: Is there a reliable method for identifying artworks? Does art have

any essential or general features? and Can art be defined? (pp. 18–19)

Carroll's claim is that his 'narrative' conception can provide an affirmative answer to the first of these questions and, rightly understood, the second. On the third, which so exercised Dickie, he remains 'agnostic' (p. 19)—although here, as elsewhere, practical agnosticism may be hard to distinguish from practical atheism. A key thesis is quoted from R. A. Sharpe: 'Art . . . is an affair of ancestors, descendants, and postulants' (p. 19). Much of the rest of the paper is taken up with elucidation and defence of such a position. Some quotations will be illustrative. So that:

If understanding a work of art involves placing it within a tradition, then challenging a particular claimant amounts to the charge that it cannot be placed in an intelligible way within the tradition. Meeting that challenge, then, is a matter of placing the claimant within the tradition (p. 21)

But such a project will locate the artwork in the artistic problematic of the time.

In order to show that the disputed work of an artist is art, we must show in the course of our narrative that the artist's assessment of the initiating situation and the resolve she formulated in response to that assessment were intelligible (p. 25)

And often this can be done; and has profound implications.

Once it is established that the artist's resolve is intelligible, we go on to show that the techniques, procedures, and strategies she enlists are effective ones for her purposes, given the lay of the artwork. (p. 25)

Here, first, there is a connection through to 'the artist's conception of the situation in which she finds herself' (p. 24). Second:

In noting the artist's conception of the situation and her resolve to change it we elucidate the impetus of her assessment of the need or opportunity for change. (p. 24)

Such (proposed) changes might concern the 'point' of art, or reception of art, but equally the artworld more generally. Such a position has obvious appeal to those, like myself, drawn

to institutional accounts of art yet not embracing Dickie's. (Indeed, there is a similarity between Carroll's talk of 'narratives' here and discussions where—thinking to translate Plato's term *logos*—I spoke of the 'story' that one told.) But the importance of this view is that it begins to offer a worked-out alternative to Dickie's institutionalism which is still true to Dickie's insights.

An argument for those insights is, Jeffrey Wicand ('Perceptually indistinguishable objects') thinks:

. . . one of the cornerstones of Dickie's approach to the philosophy of art . . . thought by him to entail an institutional, or at least contextual, theory of art. (p. 39)

The argument itself is perhaps clearest in the opening pages of Danto's *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Harvard University Press, 1981): we are presented with a number of objects which are perceptually indistinguishable but (i) only some of them are artworks and (ii) they are different artworks (when art at all). So if X can fail to be an artwork while being perceptually indistinguishable from artwork Y, its perceptual properties do not seem to be what makes Y art. And if A and B can be different artworks, although indistinguishable, again it seems that the perceptual properties cannot be crucial.

Wicand points out that, at best, this argument only tells us about some art, not (or not necessarily) all. He asks what counts as *perceptual* examination for these purposes: the key idea of a perceptual property is not 'clear as a bell' (p. 41). As a result, the whole thought-experiment lacks the clarity often ascribed to it.

Wicand is concerned that resolution here should have a practical impact, so that if two artists (say, in the Dantesque example) cannot tell their works apart:

Who cares? If the artists cannot tell the difference, there is nothing special about Artist Two's canvas for us to care about or study. (p. 45)

The outcome is that we should think of the canvases as 'generic objects which, once they are described, need not be perceived' (p. 45). But, of course, there are many other ways of

developing these ideas. For we might well think (as, say, Wollheim does) that the history of production is relevant here—it is in terms of 'what she did' that each artist can claim any praise or blame for works. Then the artists may be able to tell us what the relevant difference is, without being able to tell us which of the canvases is actually the work of each of them. Further, this seems a more relevant issue once the art-status of each (or at least of one) is settled, but the argument promised to have 'bite' on whether or not the work was art. So it seems something is missing here.

One piece of the puzzle is supplied when Wicand makes the following throw-away remark.

I am aware of no logical reason why there cannot be, by a statistical miracle, a pear tree which, apart from spatial location, no person could ever distinguish from the pear tree in my yard. I leave it to the reader to decide whether this means that pear trees are not what they are by virtue of properties they possess which can be perceived. (p. 46)

Notice, first, that what makes it a pear tree is probably not something we can perceive: it is its genetic structure, or some such. I know of no logical reason why there cannot be, by a statistical miracle, an apple tree which, apart from spatial location, no person could ever tell from Wicand's pear tree. But that is a red herring. The crucial point is that Wicand's example is based on both being pear trees, while the Danto-esque argument presents objects which are and objects which are not art.

Yet, what makes them art? If it were the 'perceptual properties' (whatever they are) then two objects sharing perceptual properties should stand in the same position *vis-à-vis* art-status. Since, *ex hypothesi*, this is not what occurs, something is missing. One alternative Wicand canvasses is to deny this possibility:

I do not think there are any circumstances under which something perceptually indistinguishable from Wright's *Robin House*, Diaghilev's original production of Stravinsky's *Firebird*, or the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel would not be a work of art (p. 47)

One might have reservations about the argumentative strategy of denying premises in this

way, but surely the list given suggests more than one response. For *Firebird* (I assume Wicand means the ballet), the question would be whether or not the perceptual indistinguishability of two performances entailed that they were tokens of the same type: if it did, of course, both would be artworks—indeed, they would be the same artwork! But one need not take that line. Still, for the Sistine Chapel ceiling, surely the stronger version is required: not just indistinguishable, but also painted by Michelangelo. And, lacking that, we might well conclude that this other work had no place in our narrative of art.

Wicand notes that, even if Dickie's arguments for his conclusions about the non-perceptual character of art-status are not compelling, those conclusions may yet be true. In explanation, he imports something like the line mentioned above, introducing reference to the artist's intentions. Wicand urges 'that works of art . . . are meant and, therefore, that they are what they are as a result of the people who make them' (p. 49). As a result, 'you cannot always tell something is a work of art by examining it' (p. 49).

Such a 'descriptive survey' is less appropriate in the case of the Danto volume, both because its introduction (by Mark Rollins) is much longer, and because Danto, too, offers a 'reading' of the whole text in his 'Responses and Replies'. This is, in fact, probably the most interesting of all the papers, since Danto seeks to respond both to the detail and to the direction of his critics. For instance, he clarifies a dispute between Noel Carroll and himself by recounting a tale: an artist had claimed that his work exemplified to perfection Danto's ideas (from *Transfiguration* . . .). Danto responded that:

Everything, if art, has to exemplify the book to perfection, just because the book being philosophy cannot and should not discriminate among artworks. Philosophy's task is to say something . . . essentially true of artworks as a class, however stylistically they may vary. [His book] entails no stylistic agenda whatever. (p. 206)

He further clarifies matters by confronting again Dickie's increasingly familiar claim, repeated here ('A tale of two artworlds'), that

his original account of art was misunderstood; that his artworld was always meant to be 'a structure of roles within which artists create art' (p. 75). As Danto notes, his own view saw 'various individuals' participating in 'a discourse of reasons' (p. 204). Here there were objects and individuals 'seeing something as art, which is a far cry from something being art' (p. 204). So Danto's account was not one describing artists only, nor could it realistically be 'a theory of what makes art' (p. 204)—with the implication that Dickie's may not fare so well here either.

On these points, Danto's remarks are well taken. So is his admiration for the contribution of Noel Carroll ('Essence, expression and history' Arthur Danto's philosophy of art'), which he regards as a 'stunning reconstruction' (p. 205) of his theory. At the centre of Carroll's analysis is first the claim that Danto's philosophy of art is essentialist, and 'that the form the essentialism takes is expressionism' (p. 89); and, second, a location for Danto's views on the art-historical Danto's theory, Carroll urges.

involves not only a philosophy of art proper— that is, an analysis of the essential nature of art—but a philosophy of art history as well: a bold Hegelian conjecture that art history is over. (p. 79)

Indeed, Danto is often thought to have (at one time) been riding two incompatible horses. 'historicism is thought to preclude essentialism' (p. 89). Many of the papers in this volume dispute this reading of Danto (especially David Carrier's 'Danto as systematic philosopher'), but Carroll's strategy here is especially clear. He first presents an account of Danto's view of art: that, as the editor summarizes, artworks 'have a subject, express a point-of-view, and require interpretation that depends on art-historical context' (p. 5) (Carroll's fuller summary is on p. 80). Then he argues that this view is compatible with Danto's historicism and, finally, he subjects the account of art to a valuably detailed discussion (pp. 99–104).

In the first task, the argument about indiscernibility plays a crucial role, emphasizing the transformative (or transfigurational) character of art-status. The artist who aims to display

mere 'real things' is bound to be disappointed: 'his collection does not comprise a collection of mere real things; for his collection is charged with meaning' (pp. 82–3). But the meaning-bearing objects are arrived at by (suitable) display of (former) real objects, and therefore cannot be distinguished from those objects merely by (local) looking. But what does art-status import? For Danto, Carroll says.

The most salient differentia between art and non-art is not simply that art is about something and, therefore, interpretable—for art shares these features with non-artistic representations—but that art expresses points-of-view about its subjects. Moreover, these points-of-view are something that flow from the very being of the artist (p. 87)

In this sense, Danto's is an *expression* theory. But it is *essentialist*, in that, through such characteristics, Danto 'advances a real definition of art in terms of necessary conditions that are jointly sufficient' (p. 89).

Is there a tension here with Danto's view, as Carroll expresses it, 'that individuating artworks must take into account the place of the work in art history' (p. 88)? The feeling of tension comes about, Carroll thinks, because the future history of art might seem likely to throw up counter-examples to the definition. For Carroll, this danger centres on the modernist project, with 'its project of self-definition' (p. 92): there is an essential openness about such a project. Here Danto invokes the idea 'that art history is over' (p. 91). He argues that 'if modernism has run its course, then the internal development history of art is over, and an essentialist philosophy of art is possible' (p. 92). In this way, 'Danto's philosophy of art history insulates [his philosophy of art] . . . from "future overthrow"' (p. 91). And the basis for the claim that modernism has run its course is to be found in the indiscernibility arguments. We see that the question 'What is the nature of art?', if framed in terms of objects (perceptually) indistinguishable from real objects, cannot be answered by reference to such perceptual properties—hence, an answer cannot 'issue from the artworld' (p. 98).

For Carroll, though not for Danto (see p. 207), the reference to modernism, and its project, must be ineliminable in any successful

argument along these lines. According to Carroll, Danto's failure to recognize this is a weakness: his reflections on art history cannot defend his philosophy of art without importing a stronger historicism (with a connection to a stylistic agenda?) than Danto wants. For Carroll, Danto's line here is one manifestation of a 'narrow construal' (p. 104) of the background appropriate to the identification of an artwork. To move ahead, following a review of Danto's discussion of art, Carroll suggests we take a broader view of Danto's justified emphasis on 'the dependence of the work of art on a historical background' (p. 104). (Here Carroll takes us on to his own position, referring [among others] to his paper in the volume for Dickel)

The argument from indiscernibility recurs as the topic of Richard Wollheim's paper ('Danto's gallery of indiscernibles'). Like Wicand in the other volume, Wollheim takes issue with the form of Danto's argument more than his conclusion. He asks:

Am I claiming that Danto was not entitled to draw this conclusion without paying rather more attention than he does to the detail of the experiment that led him to do so? (p. 31)

Wollheim answers that, yes, he is claiming that. He then draws distinctions within kinds of thought-experiments. Returning to Danto's argument, Wollheim sketches two 'assumptions for the applicability of the concepts art and work of art' (p. 33), namely:

... first, that it is generally the case that objects that have been made with the broad intention of being works of art will, as a result, stand out from objects that have not been made with such an intention, and, secondly, that it is generally the case that works of art that have been made with specific intentions will stand out from one another. (p. 33)

But, even when further refined, such assumptions, Wollheim insists, 'are not exceptionless' (p. 33). In Danto's thought-experiments 'we effectively have them transgressed' (p. 33). And that is a part of the interest of such thought-experiments.

Like Wicand, Wollheim is concerned about what precisely Danto means in speaking of these objects as 'indiscernible' (p. 34); and distinguishes two versions, 'as initial indis-

cernibility or as ultimate indiscernibility' (p. 35). Which of these does Danto require for his argument? As Wollheim records, the answer 'is far from obvious' (p. 35). But this recognition puts pressure on the whole idea of what is and what is not perceptual. Thus, the issue becomes the degree to which:

... growth of belief or information in a subject's mind can ... lead him to see a difference between two objects that, to begin with, he couldn't tell apart. (p. 35)

Or, to put that another way, on the cognitive stock appropriate for the requisite perception; for adults seeing animals in the trees in line-drawings are, in a clear sense, seeing the drawing differently from children who do not see the animals. Is such a difference perceptual? Wollheim seems inclined to answer 'yes'; but to point out that such a conception of what is given in perception is not the one against which Danto's examples are addressed. Danto, by contrast, employs 'the un-argued conviction that interpretation ... is completely independent of, and radically distinct from, perception' (p. 36). As Wollheim notes [thinking of *Transfiguration* ...], pp. 115-35], 'Danto appears to recruit to his defence a very narrow notion of perception' (p. 36). The word 'appears' is important in two ways: for Danto might not do it, and he might not (as Wollheim thinks) need to. However this dispute is resolved, it highlights both a key issue for aesthetics (the account of the perceptual it needs) and a key argument where that argument is germane.

In the fine tribute which he begins his paper, Wollheim remarks that:

What is distinctive of Arthur Danto's philosophy of art, what gives it distinction, is the way it embodies a remarkable group of characteristics that unmistakably belong to its author: the love of intricate argument, an acute visual sensibility, no small degree of intellectual ambition, a highly individual sense of tradition and of the weight of history, equanimity in the face of innovation, and an irrepressible comic energy (p. 28)

We find all of these characteristics discussed, and to some degree emulated, in the papers in the volume: for instance, the sense of history suffuses Daniel Herwitz's 'The beginning of

the end: Danto on postmodernism', while the comic drive is evanescent in Carlin Romano's 'Looking beyond the visible: the case of Arthur C. Dantwo' (a fantasy romance of two Dantos).

Pressure of space has required that some excellent pieces have gone unnamed, while others have only been mentioned. The editor makes plain his hope that this book will provide 'a better understanding of the influence that Danto—both the work and the man—has had on several generations of philosophers' (p. 8). It deserves to have that impact. Indeed, both texts reviewed here are interesting, containing ideas important for aestheticians. Yet, forced to choose, I would take the Dickie volume: the lesser philosopher has led to the more widely valuable book. Perhaps because of the intrinsic power of Danto's writings and the interest of his discussions, the contributions to the Danto volume are more closely circumscribed by his agenda—by what he takes to be key topics. As Fodor ('*Déjà vu* all over again: how Danto's aesthetics recapitulates the philosophy of mind') acknowledges, Danto has done *so much*. But, as a result, they do not go so far beyond him, and hence make less progress in aesthetics.

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Ethics, Theory and the Novel. By DAVID PARKER

Cambridge: Cambridge U. P. 1994. x + 218 pp. £32.50.

DAVID PARKER belongs to the rapidly expanding group of literary theorists who one may call the New Humanists. Though he argues that post-structuralist theory has produced some genuine insights, he accuses the critical theorists of this period of having suppressed the ethical nature of literature, of denying 'discursive possibilities, which constituted as we partly are by various religious and humanistic traditions, we stand in abiding need of, and are poorer without' (pp. 3–4). His book is an attempt to restate these discursive possibilities, but in a way that makes them compatible with what Parker believes are the new won insights of modern critical theory.

Parker adopts a view of ethics and of the relationship between ethics and literature that is

close to that of Martha Nussbaum. He follows Nussbaum both in taking the basic question of ethics to be 'How to live well' and in dismissing what she calls the 'Kantian' perspective, that ethics is a matter of clarifying certain general rules concerning how to behave towards others. Parker calls the view of moral reasoning that he adopts non-foundational and pragmatic. Moral choices are defended by showing their embeddedness in our cultural tradition, and moral reasoning involves an imaginative realization of context-embedded situations. Again, he takes Nussbaum as his model and calls this an 'Aristotelian' ethics. It is this conception of ethics, Parker argues, which has enabled a number of critics to turn again to a conception of literature as essentially a form of moral reflection, since literary works present moral conflicts realized concretely and fully.

One weakness of Parker's discussion is that he presents a substantive view of moral reasoning without arguing in its support. He just assumes that the 'non-foundational', 'pragmatic' ethics that he presents is superior to other alternatives. This is partly because he has too much respect for the 'insights' of post-modernist criticism and does not realize how damaging are the epistemological flaws in the main lines of post-modernist thought. This in spite of the fact that he points out a number of these flaws himself. He thus tends to assume that post-modernist criticism has established 'insights' that make Kantian or Utilitarian ethics impossible or uninteresting. Nor is Parker sufficiently aware of the problems for any view of literature as a form of art arising from Nussbaum's reduction of literature to moral philosophy, nor does he question her interpretation of Aristotle's ethics. He also ignores the fact that there are theorists, like Richard Eldridge, who have adopted a Kantian ethics as a basis for arguing the moral importance of literature. There are also some obvious omissions that make the 'new turn towards the ethical' seem much more of a novelty than it is; the long-running tradition in Wittgensteinian philosophy, represented by books like D. Z. Phillips' *Through a Darkening Glass: Philosophy, Literature and Cultural Change* (Oxford, 1982), which has insisted on the power of literature

to open our eyes to moral conflicts, is not mentioned.

Parker's view of moral argument leads him both to a view of the types of moral conflict that are important and a view of how the novel addresses this type of problem. Taking his cue from Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*, he identifies the major moral conflict in the 'modern' consciousness as the conflict between the Kantian ethical consciousness of the 'one law' and the Romantic-expressivist self-responsibility which demands that we are true to ourselves and realize our potential. In two chapters entitled 'The Judgemental Unconscious' and 'The Libidinal Unconscious', he presents these two types of 'ethical consciousness' both of which, as he sees it, involve 'a constricted mode of being alive' (pp. 63-4). It is the tension between these two modes of ethical consciousness, Parker maintains, that has been the great theme of the modern novel since the nineteenth century. The novel is ethically important because it presents the 'dynamic interrelatedness' of these two forms of consciousness.

The second part of the book, 'Social Beings and Innocents', argues that the great novels of the past two centuries have realized imaginatively the conflict between these two forms of ethical consciousness as a conflict between what Lawrence called 'social beings' and 'innocents'. One major form of this conflict is that of the adulterous woman who is torn between her husband who represents convention and duty and a lover who represents for her the possibility of self-realization that a life of duty cannot offer. Parker pursues this theme through five novels for more than half the length of the book. He analyses in separate chapters, *Middlemarch*, *Anna Karenina*, *The White Peacock*, *Women in Love*, and has a chapter where he compares *The First Lady Chatterley* with the final version. Much of the merit of Parker's book lies in these analyses which are perceptive and contribute genuinely new insights into the novels under discussion. Particularly striking is the way in which he explains the much discussed weakness of the Dorothea Brook part of *Middlemarch* as a manifestation of a too rigid ethical scheme that demands that Dorothea must show 'compas-

sion' to Casaubon and deny her own need of self-expression and love. George Eliot, Parker argues, was too much of a Kantian fully to be able to balance satisfactorily the demands of social morality and the demands of the self.

Ethics, Theory and the Novel makes its own very distinctive contribution to the new humanism. Although it is sharply critical of the absence of ethical concerns in post-modernist criticism, it also argues for the integration into this new humanism of such insights as post-modernist criticism apparently offers. I have suggested here that I think Parker tends to be too liberal when he tries to draw a line between what is and what is not tenable in post-modernist criticism, as well as too ready to accept the view that literary works have a distinctive contribution to make to moral reasoning. However, there is plenty of good argument in Parker's book throwing light on these issues and the book has the great virtue that it shares with some of the best contributions to the new humanism: that of offering intelligent, perceptive and in-depth discussions of literary works that not only illustrate the theses of the book, but are substantial pieces of criticism in their own right.

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Picture Theory. By W. J. T. MITCHELL. University of Chicago Press 1994. 79 illus. pp. 445. £27.95.

In 1988, the National Endowment for the Humanities published a report, *Humanities in America*, which was highly critical of scholars. It suggested that they had become too specialized, too politicized and too remote. American scholarship, it claimed, either ignored or misrepresented the fundamental values and texts of the Western tradition, while paying far too much attention to questions to do with gender, race and class. The report concluded, as Professor Mitchell puts it, that 'Western culture was in deep trouble, threatened by the very institutions of learning that are supposed to cultivate it' (p. 1).

Picture Theory might be read as a riposte to that report, for Mitchell says 'it is written in the conviction that the tensions between visual

and verbal representations are inseparable from struggles in cultural politics and political culture' (p. 3). What is needed, he adds, 'is a critique of visual culture that is alert to the power of images for good and evil and that is capable of discriminating the variety and historical specificity of their uses' (p. 3). In saying this, Mitchell merely reiterates what has become the stock position of those associated with cultural studies, the new art history and the like. But he adds a new twist, by speculating that we are coming to the end of the era dubbed the 'linguistic turn' by Rorty and entering upon an era of the 'pictorial turn'. 'We may find that the problem of the twenty-first century', Mitchell remarks, 'is the problem of the image' (p. 2). This makes it all the more urgent in his view to subject visual culture to the most searching analysis.

Although it is difficult to arrive at a final judgement concerning Mitchell's claim about the 'pictorial turn', it is certainly a plausible one. We have only to think of television, video and newer developments such as virtual reality technologies and multi-media computers in order to appreciate the important role the visual plays in contemporary culture. Even that bastion of the printed word, the encyclopaedia, has, with few exceptions, been transformed by the graphic designer to such an extent that the visual is no longer identified with the merely illustrative; it has become an integral part of the text. In a more extended sense, the image plays an important role in electioneering and modern politics increasingly resembles public relations. There is a clear need, then, for a critique of the kind Professor Mitchell calls for.

Picture Theory is very much an exercise in applied iconology, being conceived and written as a companion to an earlier work *Iconology*. As such, it does not pretend to offer a comprehensive theory of pictures; indeed, one might treat the first work of the title as a verb rather than a noun. The author remarks that he wished 'to picture theory as a practical activity in the formation of representations' (p. 6), and his collection of wide-ranging essays is intended to serve as a 'pedagogical primer'. To give some idea of this diversity, the essays range from ones on William Blake and visible language

through to metapictures (such as Velázquez's *Las Meninas*), the photographic essay, and the violence of public art. Moreover, the references and examples contained within each essay are equally diverse and wide-ranging. All of this might suggest that the essays are only very loosely related. In fact, the essays are all concerned with one or more of the following basic questions about pictures. 'What are they? What is their relation to language? Why are these questions of any importance?' (p. 5).

I would suggest it is the second of these questions that lies at the heart of this collection of essays and gives it such coherence as it has. Mitchell has extremely subtle things to say of the complicated and varied ways in which image and text may be related. He makes the challenging claim that 'all media are mixed media, and all representations are heterogeneous' (p. 5). However, the relations between media 'can be many other things besides similarity, resemblance, and analogy. Difference is just as important as similarity, antagonism as crucial as collaboration, dissonance and division of labor as interesting as harmony and blending of function' (pp. 89-90). Perhaps the most perfect example of such harmony and blending of function is the *imagetext*, as Mitchell calls it. This term designates 'composite, synthetic works (or concepts) that combine image and text' (p. 89n.). A political cartoon or typical advertisement would be a case in point. At the other end of the scale, we have the most uncompromising and austere of non-representational paintings; but even here the image cannot, Mitchell argues, exist entirely apart from the domain of the verbal.

Many of these essays are witty, subtle and perceptive; without exception they are well written and extremely well informed. The book, then, would seem highly recommendable, and yet I have reservations about its intended role as 'pedagogical primer' and especially in the light of the criticisms voiced in *Humanities in America*.

Mitchell is surely right to insist that scholars should be free to ask awkward questions about the influence and significance of art and images of all kinds in our culture, including questions that touch upon race, gender and class. But the methods, assumptions and impact of cultural

studies also need to be thoroughly scrutinized and debated. It is a moot question whether those working within cultural studies have paused to question the most basic assumptions—the *Weltanschauung*—of the French theorists to whom they are so heavily indebted. Perhaps they feel that these questions have somehow been settled. Mitchell remarks that 'the concepts of the metapicture and the imagetext, for instance, are simply crystallizations of what has become *common sense* in post-modern picture theory' (my italics, p. 366). The phrase '*common sense*' is revealing, it suggests that we may be witnessing the emergence of a new orthodoxy but one whose philosophical foundations and implications have not been properly examined. The choice of phrase is interesting in yet another way. It describes a highly sophisticated way of thinking, which is frequently at odds with *common sense*, as just another species of it.

The debate to which Professor Mitchell refers, then, is far from settled. The new approach adopted by many scholars raises important questions, some of which have yet to be addressed. Until such time as they are, a pedagogical primer would seem a little premature.

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Transformations in Personhood and Culture After Theory: The Languages of History, Aesthetics, and Ethics. Edited by CHRISTIE McDONALD and GARY WIEHL. Pennsylvania State U. P. 1993. pp. 190. £13.95.

THIS COLLECTION of very diverse papers is provided with a gloss saying that the contributions 'focus on the essentially moral desire within humanistic inquiry to seek a point of contact between personal experience and intellectual reflection', and that what emerges 'are personal, responsible, situated languages that engage intellectuals after the waves of abstract theory of the past twenty years'. This reviewer, however, is left wondering whether this highly abstract unity can motivate the bringing together of papers representing such a diversity of subject matter and approach.

The paper I found most interesting was Charles Altieri's 'Intentionality Without Intentionality: Wittgenstein and the Dynamics of Subjective Agency'. The helpful note on the contributors tells us that this is a condensation of the main ideas of his forthcoming book on *expressivist agency*. Altieri is disenchanted with a post-structuralism he still finds trapped within a system of binary oppositions which it has inherited from the ontologies it tries to undermine, with the upshot that 'our hopes for an inner sanctuary from the marketplace in fact deepen our dependency on those ideological and personal relationships promising us images for an ego that in fact is nothing but a lack tormenting us with its insubstantiality'. Altieri wants to offer an overall stance on questions of subjective agency, building its psychology on logical and grammatical features of what seems basic to the very possibility of attributing contents to first-person states. Not surprisingly, Wittgenstein's comments on intentionality is the main inspiration behind this approach, locating subjective agency in relation to a more fluid and less metaphysical structure of differences than does, for instance, Derrida. In particular, Altieri makes pertinent and highly interesting use of Wittgenstein's comments on aspect blindness in relation to the questions of subjective agency.

Judith Schlanger asks the question 'How Old is Our Cultural Past?', and gives us the answer, too: 'one hundred years old'. This answer is similar to Horace's notion from the *Epistles*, that 'if it has rounded up to one hundred years, a work is old and serious'. As might be expected, however, Schlanger's reasoning differs somewhat from Horace's. By calling a work 'old and serious', we point to the fact that it is present in a way we want to emphasize. One hundred years is not an arbitrary number, however, if we take one generation of cultural memory to be roughly thirty years, for then 'to have been around for one hundred years' means that it has been 'received and received as already transmitted'. It is, in a manner of speaking, a third generation immigrant. This means that the past of cultural memory need not be as remote as its historical contents.

It is by no means certain that a potential reader of this book who finds Altieri's or Judith Schlanger's papers interesting, will find anything of interest in the other contributions. Take the paper by Nancy Austin. Her paper is a fairly standard art-historical piece, challenging the art-internalist view of the emergence of impressionist painting. Austin shows the importance of the developing system of railways in France in directing the attention of the enlightened middle-classes out to the French countryside, and convincingly argues that popular illustrated magazines were instrumental in shaping a new sensitivity to the detail and character of landscape. Austin may well be right in contending that the high-art presuppositions of much work in this area have blinded many commentators to the importance of popular entertainment in the development of new artistic movements, but one is left wondering what this well-researched paper has to do with 'transformations in personhood and culture after theory'.

Given the title of the book, the relevance of the last three of this collection of eleven papers is easier to argue. Rosi Braidotti's 'Theories of Gender', Sara Westphal's 'Stories of Gender' (a commentary on Braidotti) and Mary Bittner Wiseman's 'Three Renaissance Madonnas. Freud and the Feminine' are all, in different ways, feminist contributions. Braidotti provides an interesting history of feminist theory from de Beauvoir up to the present, and distinguishes different epochs within this history. What does not work, however, is her illustration of these epochs with references to the songs of several woman rock/pop musicians. Westphal remarks that Braidotti's paper was first read at the end of a long day of papers at a conference in 1991, and that her playing of the relevant records worked wonders on a tired audience. In this version of the paper, however, the examples are just silly: 'as an example of the intensity of this particular moment of feminist theory, I refer to the deconstruction of feminine identity by women punk rockers of the early 1980s . . . such as Nina Hagan (*sic*)'. This is the only use made of the references to popular music, there are no further explanations, and no lyrics. The editors should have deleted such passages, provided the

lyrics—or maybe included a CD with the music? That, at least, would have been a transformation in the culture of academic publishing!

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Richard Serra Writings/Interviews By RICHARD SERRA. Chicago U P 1994. 37 illus. Paperbound, £14.25

THE PHOTOGRAPH of Richard Serra on the dust-cover says it all: uncompromising, formidable, even a little truculent. As we read through the interviews and writings, spanning two decades, we begin to understand the vision of art that possesses Serra and gives him such moral conviction. It is a very pure vision, though it will strike some as merely outmoded. 'I have never felt and I don't feel now', he remarked in 1985 against the backdrop of post-modernism, 'that art needs any justification outside of itself' (p. 171). Accordingly, the sculpture he makes 'does not allow for experience outside the conventions of sculpture as sculpture' (p. 117). If there are experiences which cannot fittingly be broached in this medium, then Serra will turn to either drawing or film, for his talents and accomplishments embrace both. But it is for his sculpture and especially the site-specific work that he is best known. Therefore, the review will concentrate upon the latter, even though the book has a much wider scope in keeping with Serra's many interests.

Serra stresses how radical a notion site-specific sculpture is. It 'led to work that completely destroyed the notion of the object', he asserts, 'by emphasizing the interrelationship with a given site'. 'When site and work become inseparable', he adds, 'it implies that the perception of the work does not remove us from the real world but rather involves us in it' (my italics, p. 235). This last consideration is especially important for Serra, since he believes that too much modern sculpture is inextricably bound up with the Artworld and dependent upon the museum. For him as a sculptor, the site-specific work offers an opportunity to explore and make manifest the inherent qualities of a particular landscape, urban location or museum-setting. In this way, Serra hopes that

his work, though wholly non-representational and unswervingly faithful to the medium, will interact with the 'real world'. The interest of Serra's project, then, lies in how, while refusing to dilute his sculpture with non-sculptural elements, he intends that it should involve us more deeply in the world rather than confine us within the art museum. In other words, Serra, who might otherwise seem the most uncompromising of modernists, seeks a way back into the world through his site-specific sculpture. But how exactly is it supposed to interact with the world?

One of the most rewarding features of this book is how clearly Serra explains the nature of the interrelationship. He points out that a work may be related to its context in a number of ways, including size, scale, placement and the site's 'signifiers'. But Serra is not merely trying to produce something that is in keeping with its surroundings, the sculptural object may provide, to use the artist's favourite word, a critique of the place for which it has been uniquely designed. He sees this as the artist's prerogative and contrasts the very different ways in which architect and sculptor design with context in mind. The architect wishes to produce something that will harmonize with what is already in place, whereas Serra believes that he has the right to question and if necessary challenge the *status quo*. This can be seen most dramatically in the case of *Tilted Art*, a work which was discussed in these pages on an earlier occasion (Vol. 33, No. 1), and which repudiated the ideological associations of Federal Plaza's architecture. Here, then, is an example of site-specific sculpture that *did* interact with the world but in ways that were deemed politically unacceptable. (It was, of course, dismantled and effectively destroyed in 1989. The present collection of writings contains Serra's impassioned defence of the doomed work.)

One of Serra's most recent commissions provides us with another example of how site-specific sculpture can change how we see the place for which it has been designed, though in this case it is the art museum rather than the 'real world' that provides the context. The Tate commissioned the sculptor to make a work for the new Duveen Galleries. Serra made clear in an interview with Nicholas Serota and David

Sylvester that he found the internal architecture unsympathetic, largely due to the fact that the Sackler Octagon dominated the north and south galleries and dictated how the space was read. Serra's sculptural solution was to make two massive forged blocks (*Weight and Measure*, 1992) and place them in the north and south galleries on either side of the dominant Octagon. The intention was to 'set up a visual field where the entire space becomes a manifestation of sculpture' (p. 272). In this sense we might think of the sculpture as a critique of the architecture, an implied criticism of the overbearing, 'authoritarian' nature of the Sackler Octagon. But it is a critique in a broader sense as well, for Serra is using sculptural means to articulate and make explicit the interior's volume. He wishes to 'make the volume of the space *tangible*, so that it is understood immediately, physically by your *body*' (my italics, p. 273). Only a sculptor could think of making space tangible, palpable.

If site-specific sculpture is intended to serve principally as a critique of its context, then whatever decorative, illustrative or aesthetic values it may have would seem to be secondary—a point Serra himself confirms in several interviews. Indeed, Serra frets that *Weight and Measure* might be interpreted in a 'metaphorical or imagistic' way, for he thinks that because we find non-representational art too unyielding, too uncomfortable, we are forever seeking ways of domesticating it 'by making it needlessly referential' (p. 277). In the end, Serra remains faithful to his punist vision of art, and though he may have found a way of taking his work out into the world, he has made few, if any, concessions in the process.

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The Language of Displayed Art By MICHAEL O'TOOLE. Leicester U. P. 1994. pp. 295. 50 plates, inc. 4 colour. £40.

WHAT CAN one say about a work of art? If we are short of ideas then Michael O'Toole's *The Language of Displayed Art* has some to offer. It is an orderly textbook, aimed primarily at students wondering how to tackle the problem of discussing paintings and other objects of aesthetic interest.

O'Toole's method is to take M. A. K. Halliday's 'Systemic-Functional Grammar', and apply it to the languages of art, including painting, sculpture and architecture (but not music and dance). Halliday himself has considered some literary aspects of his linguistic theory, and a glance at the bibliography makes it clear that for O'Toole the consideration of Halliday's ideas was the centre of gravity of the book. He is reliant on a range of secondary sources for his information about individual works, and this is not the book to consult in order to find out about particular paintings, sculptures or buildings. Its purpose is to teach a method, the use of which will produce an illuminating description of the work, and he gives a range of examples, in which historical, formal and narrative considerations are brought to bear.

From traditional works of art, such as Botticelli's *Primavera*, O'Toole analyses three 'functions', which are termed 'representational', 'modal' and 'compositional'; so that more abstract work seems diminished by comparison. For example, the paintings of Mondrian and Jackson Pollock are discussed under the heading 'monofunctional tendencies', as works in which the compositional function has taken over as a priority. The idea is developed further when O'Toole moves from painting to architecture, when the 'representational function' of painting is replaced by the utilitarian function of buildings. It is important for his general approach that these terms are seen to have some equivalence, because the aim is to have each field correlate with a general semiotic system, so that it becomes possible to make comparisons between the messages communicated by, say, paintings on one hand, and architecture on the other. He gives a worked example of this procedure in a consideration of Breugel's *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* and Auden's *Musée des Beaux-Arts*.

While O'Toole puts the works themselves at the centre of attention, and there can be no doubt that he takes them seriously, the semiotic system to which he subjects everything can seem clumsy and obsessive when it is introduced into the discussion of individual works. The writing is schoolmasterly and unbeguiling in tone, with underlined words and words in

bold type, but it is clear and has the merit (for teaching) that he does not make oblique references to other theoretical works, except by resorting occasionally to German words (for which apology is always made) and so it should not be daunting for a student who has the will to learn the lessons on offer.

Throughout the book there is an unexpected insistence that historical knowledge about the painting, or of ancient mythology and such-like, is to be valued in a consideration of the painting *only in so far as it is relevant to the painting*. What is extraordinary about this insistence is not so much that the point is made, but that it is made several times. Presumably, this is because of O'Toole's repeated exposure to undergraduate essays which have filled up the required space without properly addressing the question. Some of the remarks, included to make the text 'friendlier' in tone, are strangely dismaying: 'Do you find, like me, that you are so brainwashed by . . . assumptions about size that you only tend to look at the larger canvases in a gallery and only too easily hurry past exquisite small paintings?'

O'Toole may perhaps be correct in saying that much of the information traditionally recorded about paintings by art historians is there for the sake of arriving at a notion of its monetary worth, but nevertheless one can be grateful for it when it gives the means to answer a question which the compiler of the information might not have thought to ask. For example, he thinks it unhealthy when catalogues list all the places a painting has ever hung, or all the people who have ever owned it, comparing this practice with the keeping of pedigrees for dogs. That may well have been the motivation for finding the information, but once found it can be put to good use. This is not to say that O'Toole is wrong in thinking that there are more interesting things to say about the paintings, but he too readily attributes a malign motive to the provision of routine information. Again, this makes sense if his remarks are seen to be directed at the authors of undergraduate essays, rather than of 'standard' textbooks. There is quite a bit of hostility towards art historians expressed in Chapter 5 'Why Semiotics?', but the art historians in question seem to be 'traditional' connoisseurs,

and his tactic is to immunize his undergraduate audience against falling under the spell of intellectually louché suavity.

If O'Toole's own scholarly agenda is to apply Halliday's linguistics to the visual arts, then he has tried to widen his audience by directing the book primarily at students not of linguistics, but of the visual arts. This endeavour has been seriously undermined by the publisher's decision to set a high price, putting it out of reach of its largest audience. Also (especially at this price) the quality of colour reproduction should be higher. It is adequate to convey such of the qualities of a Mondrian as can be carried by a postcard, but the image of *Primavera* suffers more crucially, being so unclear that it is not possible to follow the variously directed glances of eyes, which figure significantly in O'Toole's exemplary presentation.

From the point of view of a student in art appreciation, in the consideration of individual works O'Toole's apparatus is effectively reduced to a check-list of possible topics for discussion, and there is no harm in its expedient use in such a way, reading the book would be a good way for a student to develop some precision in thinking about art and the way it works, even though O'Toole's ideas would not explicitly be mentioned in the student's essay. But its special merit is to be found when looking for a common schema in which to consider works of aesthetic interest in different disciplines; and its greatest potential for usefulness will be in the study of culture and cultural history, rather than in the study of 'monodisciplinary' art or architectural history as such.

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Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art. By HANS BELTING, translated by Edmund Jephcott. Chicago and London: Chicago U. P. 1994. pp. 651. £51.95.

THIS MASTERLY volume, translated from the German, will become one of the standard works on icons, alongside the work of Kitzinger and Ouspensky. Belting himself has an extensive reputation in the field, so Jephcott's

translation is very welcome. It is a lengthy and detailed book, dealing in depth with historical issues, theological controversy and aesthetic theory. But, primarily, it is a work of art history, and is likely to be of greatest interest to art historians.

Belting traces the history of icons back to an age that thought of 'images' not as artworks, but as objects of veneration. Just as relics of the saints were held to possess spiritual power, an icon of the Virgin Mary, for example, could also be venerated. 'Only a person or a "mystery" of the faith can be venerated. The image derives its authority in the first case from the authentic appearance of a holy person, and in the second case from its "correct" treatment of an event in the history of salvation' (p. 30). An individual icon is authenticated by reference to a type which refers back to a given archetype. These archetypes were often held to be *acheiropoietic*—not made by human hands; or were believed to be painted by a witness of Christ, such as St Luke. Thus, an icon of the Virgin is not only an image of a woman representing the mother of Jesus, it also has a theological title and reference, in this case *theotokos*, or *meter theou*—'mother of God'. The icon is more than an image, it is a credal representation of the Virgin's role in the salvation of humankind. Even today, examples of this archetype (which are not strictly tokens of types), can be an object of inspiration and spiritual reflection, not only for their aesthetic beauty, but for the truth they are intended to represent.

It is not a great step to suppose, as many did, that the images took on special powers which had been associated with the saint depicted. Through their likeness, the Holy became tangible, and the icons were believed able to work miracles, heal sickness or deliver victory in battle. Other icons were said to bleed or weep as the one whom they depicted might have done (p. 195). In Rome icons were processed through the streets at festival times, and theological relationships, such as that between Virgin and Son, were expressed through iconic rituals (p. 313).

It is inevitable that objects treated in this way and for which claims of such significance were made, should cause controversy. On one level, by their theological statement, they could con-

tribute to theological and hence political debate. On another level, their very existence and use in devotion has provoked strong feelings throughout church history.

Firstly, an image of the crucifixion, for example, raises a question about who died on the cross. During seventh-century theological controversies Anastasius introduced icons to his opponents, confronting them with a particular doctrine. If Christ's eyes are depicted as closed, the implication is that he really died, counter to the claims of those who believed he had no earthly body. 'Such panels do not, therefore, simply narrate an episode from the Passion of Christ but take up the discussion of the God-man as the Crucified' (p. 139). By emulating state images of rulers and kings, other icons could testify to the kingship of Christ, or to the quasi-consular status of St Peter. In this way, heretics could be challenged through the very images which they were soon to despise.

In the seventh and eighth centuries arose what is now referred to as the *iconoclastic controversy*, which stemmed from the belief that veneration of icons posed an obstacle for the conversion of Jews and Muslims. The Byzantine Emperor Leo III decreed that icons were idols, which should be destroyed. This led to the persecution and martyrdom of many monks who could not agree to this denial of their spirituality. But in Rome, Pope Gregory III and St John of Damascus opposed Leo, and the beginnings of the great schism can be traced in these controversies. The restoration of icons was not achieved until 843, and although agreement was reached, the damage to the relationship between East and West was never repaired.

Belting discusses the ways in which icons and statues were changed by theological and personal taste. From the eleventh century, emotional states and narrative elements became common. This indicated that they were intended for private contemplation, and were privately owned. It was safe to own and collect them. They also ceased to be dependent upon old archetypes, but rather took an event or idea as a resource, rather than an ancient image. Here we can recognize something more akin to a post-renaissance concept of art, and also notice the shift from veneration to contemplation.

In this lies the major theme of Belting's book. During what he calls the 'era of art', which continues to the present day, the 'aesthetic' qualities became more and more significant, and the icon painters became more confident and adventurous in their depictions, such that they began to make their own statements, rather than reproducing ancient originals. It could be said that before the era of art, icons were almost allographic, becoming more autographic over an extended period of time. The implications of Belting's work on theories about forgeries; types and tokens, or intentionality would be fascinating to pursue, and his enquiry raises the issue of the role of religious art as art. If the modern concept of art has emerged, slowly but surely from a tradition of religious painting, just as the modern concept of music has arisen from a monastic tradition where the music was entirely devotional, to what extent can we assume icons and plainsong to be—and treat them as—art? Belting indicates a history of subtle shift, rather than radical change, but at points along a continuum we can detect some fundamental ideological differences. Not only is Belting's book magisterial in its treatment of the history of images, it is profoundly provocative and fascinating to art historians and philosophers.

GORDON J. GILES

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The Collected Writings of T. E. Hulme Edited by KAREN CHENGEL. Clarendon Press. 1994. pp. 489.

PROFESSIONAL PHILOSOPHERS of the late twentieth century must surely admire and delight in T. E. Hulme's sparky, tough, imaginative and totally un-shy intelligence. He had a searching and unsentimental gaze, a gift for Henry Jamesian awkwardnesses and, in spite of his conviction that reality consists entirely of cinders, an unquenchable zest for life.

Hulme's writings include poetry, philosophy, political theory, literary and art criticism, war diaries and letters. His work began to appear in print in 1909, although his early philosophical notes, begun in 1907, were not published until after his death when they were edited and pruned by Herbert Read who

retained Hulme's own title of 'Cinders' for them. In a kind of middle period of philosophical work, from 1909 to 1912, Hulme dedicated himself to the study, propagation and defence of Henri Bergson, writing over twenty articles on him in those years. When that allegiance waned he turned again to the development of his own thoughts. Again, publication was posthumous. These later reflections appear in the present volume as 'A Notebook'. He died in action in the First World War at the age of thirty-four.

Hulme's short life was crammed with rich and varied experiences. Rebellious and high-spirited behaviour resulted in his premature departure from both Oxford and Cambridge and he subsequently travelled in Canada and on the continent. He was a member of the Poets' Club, knew Pound, Eliot, Rupert Brooke, Russell and Bergson, and became influential through lecturing widely on poetry, language and literature. He developed a burning interest in politics and in social and political theory and it was, perhaps, his passion to embrace and understand as much as possible of such matters, and of everything else as well, that led him towards his view of the world as incorrigibly plural, fractured and disparate.

'Cinders' is exhilarating reading, partly because it calls up certain intuitions that seem to be embedded in the bones of many people, partly because of Hulme's gnomic and often proclamatory style, which is much like the early Wittgenstein, but with added joy. 'The world', he announces, 'is a plurality . . . there is no common purpose in the world . . .' (p. 9). And, 'All is flux. The moralists, the capital letterists, attempt to find a framework outside the flux, a solid bank for the river, a pier rather than a raft' (p. 10). The 'cinders', as already mentioned, are, for Hulme, the bedrock of what we have, through and over which we work ephemeral paths of order and meaning, producing 'oases in the desert of grit' or 'a kind of manufactured chess-board laid on a cinder heap' (p. 9). Persons are 'animals who communicate' and language 'a gossamer web' that connects them but which, used to excess, becomes a disease in that human beings forget that it is simply that which connects them and come to think of it as a means of explaining

themselves. Death is 'a breaking up into cinders' (p. 9) and 'there is no unity of laws, but merely of the sorting machine' (p. 10). The aim of science and of all thought is 'to reduce the complex and inevitably disconnected world of grit and cinders to a few ideal counters, which we can move about and so form an ungritlike picture of reality . . .' (p. 11). In Schopenhauerian vein he declares that *motives* are the constitution of our mental world: 'Motives are the only unalterable and fixed things in the world' (p. 16).

In 'A Notebook', Hulme sets out his philosophical views in a more sustained way and with a stubborn moral commitment, reminiscent of Camus', to achieving clarity concerning the human condition. He maintains that we fall into error when we try to elide the separate regions of mathematical physics, organic life, and religion and ethics. They have, he says, no unity or coherence but a radical discontinuity, the acknowledgement of which can enable us to recover 'the real significance of many things' (p. 427).

Hulme discerns a similar kind of error—a scandal, he calls it—in the practice of philosophy. Since the Renaissance, he maintains, philosophers have deployed an impersonal, scientific method to prop up aims and conceptions that are actually personal ones, 'nearer to the heart's desire', and to draw conclusions that they find personally *satisfying*. This technique, he concludes, along with an unconscious *Weltanschauung* deriving from an uncritical humanism, has resulted in all post-Renaissance philosophies possessing a family resemblance: a kind of fudge consisting of 'something perfectly human and arbitrary cloaked in a scientific vocabulary' (p. 430). To redeem this situation he advocates a Critique of Satisfaction (a 'grotesque title', he admits): an analysis of what it is that has been propounded as finally *satisfying*, conducted in an awareness of the gap he has described between the organic and the ethical. Briefly, Hulme concludes that Perfection will never be found or created on the horizontal, human plane. If we ask in what ways the conclusions of philosophers have, allegedly, been *satisfying* we are, he says, 'forced back along every line in the plane, back on the centre' (p. 438). We are then compelled to recognize a per-

pendicular line or plane: 'In other words, you get the religious attitude, where things are separate which ought to be separated, and Perfection is not illegitimately introduced on the plane of human things' (ibid.). This is to realize 'the tragic significance of life'. Hulme's aim here is not to convince the humanist that the religious attitude is right but, he suggests, 'we can at least destroy the *naïveté* of his canons of satisfaction' (p. 440). His ensuing critique of humanism, given in pursuance of this aim, held my attention with the grip of a vividly written thriller. So did his writing on language, art, creativity, romanticism and classicism.

Hulme had the ability to be scarily rude about people and opinions he did not like. He wrote with a terrible scorn of Clive Bell's pacifism and aestheticism, and with a cruel perceptiveness and lack of what would now be called political correctness about the women, or 'harem', attending Bergson's lectures.

What of his poems? He wrote only a handful, two or three of which were judged by Eliot as 'among the most beautiful short poems in the English language'. I am doubtful about that superlative. What is clear is that, with Hulme, there is no quarrel between his poetry and his philosophy. All his writing is a tonic to the mind because it is so endearingly unguarded and generative of thought, talk and liberating flights of conjecture.

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The T. S. Eliot-Middleton Murray Debate: The Shaping of Literary Theory: Modernist to Post-structuralist. By L. R. SHARMA. Allahabad: Silver Birch. 1994. pp. 158. £33.

THE AIM of Sharma's book is to reassess the importance of the debate between Eliot and Middleton Murray in terms of Eliot's thought and for the traditions of literary criticism which Eliot influenced. Sharma argues that the debate between the two in the twenties has been consistently overlooked by critics and biographers who, following the line taken by Eliot and his circle, underrate Murray as a thinker and as a literary critic. His book is partly literary history, explaining the events which led to Eliot's eventual *de facto* victory, but also partly a study

in the genealogy of literary critical ideas, uncovering influences on critical thought which have been ignored. The book wishes to show that 'this debate contained the seeds of several aspects of Modern and later literary theory' (p. 12).

Middleton Murray has sunk nearly into obscurity: his collected essays, *Defending Romanticism*, edited by Malcolm Woodfield, was only published in 1989. In contrast, Eliot's influence on criticism, for better or for worse, has always been seminal. Sharma's argument suggests that Eliot's key pronouncements on criticism and literature—'The Function of Criticism', 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', for example—can only be properly understood in the context of his debate with Murray. The debate was wide-ranging: from its origin as dispute between 'romanticism' and 'classicism' in English poetry, it soon moved on to wider literary issues, and then theological and epistemological concerns.

The central part of the book outlines the main points of the debate. Here the text is a little confusing, dealing as it does both with ideas and the social effects of the various articles; moreover, Sharma is not a 'fair referee', as he consistently presents Murray in the better light, both morally and intellectually, and he refuses to put Murray's much less convincing thought under the same scrutiny as he does Eliot's. Eliot is presented both as a deep thinker and as an ambitious cynical polemicist, attacking Murray as much for his personality and power as for his views: 'by opposing Murray intelligently, Eliot would only improve his own reputation' (p. 21). There are a number of textbook examples of how Eliot smiles, but carries a knife under his cloak. Eliot would quite simply condemn something (Lawrence's *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, which he was later to praise, for example) in order to confound and humiliate Murray.

It is Sharma's contention that Murray's influence on Eliot is not simply limited to Eliot's obvious polemical pieces but, rather, 'when Eliot wrote anything, particularly after 1919, he could not write without Murray's ghost in his mind' (p. 2). Even *After Strange Gods*, Eliot's anti-semitic quasi-fascistic tract of 1934, is read as taking Murray as its unspoken

target, although it was written after Eliot had triumphed in the duel of journal articles which made up the debate. This is perhaps where Sharma's work is at its most convincing. Sharma explores a number of areas where Eliot's thought was arguably considerably influenced by Murray. For example, Sharma argues that Eliot's idea of tradition, partially developed in dialogue with Murray, reflects many of Murray's ideas, differing only in emphasis. Impersonality and the dissociation of sensibility, too, reflect ideas shared by Murray in only slightly differing forms. Murray's poem from 1913, 'The Critic in Judgement', 'seems strangely to anticipate' (p. 80) Eliot's theory of knowledge. Perhaps the clearest symptom of Murray's influence for Sharma is the change of Eliot's views on Milton: 'Milton I' from 1936 is surprisingly close to Murray's critical stance, whereas 'Milton II' (1947) shows a change in Eliot's position, specifically in order to attack Murray's *Heaven and Hell* from 1938; indeed, Sharma, in his attempt to revive Murray's reputation, portrays the later Eliot as a man almost pathologically obsessed with kicking Murray when he was down. Sharma argues that Eliot's view of Milton can only be seen in its fullest light in relation to Murray's.

The final, and weakest, section of the book aims to argue that the influence of 'the debate' between these two figures is a key moment in literary critical history and deeply influential on the development of criticism as a discourse. Sharma suggests that Leavis, for example, was more deeply influenced by Murray than by Lawrence, in terms of morality and in terms of humanist thought in general. Weak correlations between Murray and Empson, Richards and Trilling are brought up. More plausibly, Sharma shows how Forster was influenced by Murray. The New Critics, taking their bearings from Eliot, are influenced in a negative way by Murray, and reproduce the outlines of the debate in their thought. Sharma wants to claim Poulter and the Geneva school for Murray as well, arguing that Murray is an early 'critic of consciousness': 'Murray made Husserl's philosophy part of his own thought, and he did this before the Geneva critics' (p. 125). Finally, Sharma argues most unconvincingly that the

Eliot-Murray debate and its concern with language foreshadows structuralist and post-structuralist thought. This section makes much of tenuous similarities and vague phrases, despite Sharma's obvious familiarity with a wide range of contemporary critical thought.

There is obviously room for a reassessment of Murray's thought, and it is certainly true that Eliot's essays read very differently when put into the context of an ongoing debate with Murray. As a work of literary history the book makes clear the significance of the Eliot-Murray debate for modernist literary thought. In relation to a literary critical genealogy, however, the debate is really not as important as Sharma would have us believe: the Eliot-Murray axis is not central to the development of contemporary literary theory, not least because the presuppositions by which both writers oriented themselves have been thrown deeply into doubt.

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Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History By ALEX POTTS. Yale U. P.

1994. pp. 294 + 46 b. and w. illus. £29.95.

'WHAT,' ASKS Alex Potts at the beginning of this book, 'does the name Johann Joachim Winckelmann usually conjure up?' Most of us will recall his oft-quoted and somewhat reassuring dictum that we should find in the art of the Greeks 'a noble simplicity and a calm grandeur'. In undergraduate essays this is often invoked to explain the enthusiasm felt by late eighteenth-century artists and their public for smooth nudes and solemn death-bed scenes. But many of us will also recall, less comfortably, Winckelmann's predilection for beautiful boys and his positively gloating appreciation of representations of horrific violence and pain, like the Laocoön. Can this man have founded the gentlemanly discipline of Art History?

Gentlemanly no longer. Where earlier commentators had coughed politely and talked of the Romantic sensibility, Potts takes his subject by the throat. He starts with 'noble simplicity and calm grandeur' and demonstrates, in six highly engrossing pages, the complex and contradictory ideas embodied in that familiar

phrase. By separating out the apparently traditional appeal to aristocratic norms of decorum he uncovers deeper and more disturbing implications: 'If "noble simplicity" [connotes] a world of patrician self-possession and calm, it could also suggest a kind of *tabula rasa* of subjectivity that was at odds with the affectations and excesses of high society, something approaching a proto-revolutionary ideal'. Similarly, with 'calm grandeur', Potts finds hints of resonant heroism but also 'the stillness of an imperturbable calm that might be inanimate or inhuman, perhaps the stillness of death'.

Winckelmann's aesthetic stance is further complicated by his intense physical response to Classical sculpture, an electric charge which crackles through his celebrated descriptions of, for instance, the Apollo or the Belvedere Antinous. This is the spark which turns description into poetry but, at the same time, generates such tension as it oscillates between 'ideals' of sado-masochistic fantasy and a yearning for actual pleasures of the flesh which were, in his day, totally forbidden. Hence, the very apt title of this book, the subtitle is less convincing because, although Potts has written elsewhere on Winckelmann's importance as a pioneer of art history, that is not really his main concern here. *Flesh and the Ideal* addresses the tensions and contradictions inherent in Winckelmann's pursuit of a dream which was at once compelling and unattainable. Towards the end of his great *History of Ancient Art* (quoted pp. 48-9), Winckelmann compares his own dilemma with that of 'a maiden, standing on the shore of the ocean, [who] follows with tearful eyes her departing lover with no hope of ever seeing him again, and fancies that in the distant sail she sees the image of her beloved'. It is a simile that encapsulates many of the themes of Potts' book: the lost ideal which is an object of desire but at the same time unrecoverable, the historian's projective power which is necessary in order to understand the past but which may also create delusions, and even the intriguing way that the author casts himself in the role of a woman. This is highly suggestive stuff and it is perhaps not surprising that, in seeking a route through the maze, Potts turns to Freudian psychoanalysis. To some of the more punt-
inckel readers of this Journal, psychoanalysis,

whether in its classic Freudian or in its trendy Lacanian form, is a discredited pseudo-science which must sooner rather than later follow Marxism into the dustbin of history. Well, perhaps—but it can also be seen as a body of discourse which, like Winckelmann's writings, trades in powerful symbols and may yet throw light in unexpected corners. One way or another, Dr Potts has written a most illuminating study of an important but difficult writer and his book is to be thoroughly recommended.

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The Early Years of Art History in the United States. Edited by CRAIG HUGH SMYTH and PETER M. LUKKHART. Princeton: Princeton University Department of Art, 1993. pp. 205 + 64 b. and w. plates. Paperbound, £19.95.

THIS PUBLICATION contains papers on the beginning years of art history in American universities—papers offered in special sessions of the College Art Association in 1987, 1988 and 1989. The papers are of a rather casual reminiscent sort, and are not very rich in interesting theoretical matters, though there are rewarding contents. The time treated is up to 1930.

We learn that under Allan Marquand, Princeton's Department of Art and Archaeology was established in 1883. In general, the early years in America were dominated not by critical theory but by the factual and scientific approach favoured in archaeology. In classes, the 'modern' area began with the Renaissance. A survey under Marquand revealed that in 1912, of the one million students in American higher education, 163,000 had some kind of art course, and of these, 145,000 worked in established art history departments. Less than one per cent of the instructors taught art history exclusively. Harvard offered a total of eighteen courses; Michigan, Chicago and Dartmouth offered eleven; Yale, seven, Bryn Mawr, eight, Berkeley, five, and Pennsylvania, thirteen. But Princeton offered thirty-four, published a series of art monographs, offered two fellowships in art and had a new museum with Marquand as director. And in 1920 the School of

Architecture was separated from the Department of Art and Archaeology. These are crucial harbingers of things to come. In 1912 American institutions offered 420 art history courses in all, heavily slanted towards Greek, Roman, Medieval and Christian art, with emphasis also on the Renaissance. Charles Morey succeeded Marquand as chairman in 1924. Morey created the ambitious Index of Christian Art. At Princeton in the thirties graduate students were expected to make up gaps in historical background, and to take a three-day written examination, with nine hours for art-historical problems, nine hours for questions of fact and nine hours for a critical theme. The ground covered was 'from the pyramids to Picasso'. In these years T. M. Greene published his influential *The Arts and the Art of Criticism*, and Albert Friend offered a course in the Northern Renaissance for which (wanting his students to know what was considered 'real' in the later Middle Ages) he handed each student twenty-four typed lectures on religious and philosophic thought from the early Greeks to Neo-Platonism. There was a mid-term essay but no final examination. E. Baldwin Smith was teaching modern painting from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, making it clear that for recent work 'he had no sympathy'. George Rowley opened an important new vista with his *Principles of Chinese Painting*. And Panofsky came from Germany for occasional seminars.

In a reminiscence about Harvard, Edward Warburg reveals that in his graduation oration for 1930, he embarrassed Professor Paul Sachs and others by complaining that the tutors at Harvard had a primary interest not in teaching but in achieving higher degrees (the more things change . . .). Charles Eliot Norton came to Harvard to teach probably the first fine arts course given in America or England. In a big auditorium, with no slides or photographs, Norton usually drew about 1200 students. One of these was Bernard Berenson. Also Paul Sachs offered the first museum course anywhere. In it he had students place art objects in their hands and discuss 'what does it say to you'—and he did not always choose a great work. Professor Chandler Post wanted his PhD candidates to know everything, and on one occasion is said to have asked for the names of all popes between

Martin V and Innocent X (followed by the question of who painted their portraits).

Vassar was founded on the assumption that God endowed women with the same intellectual gifts as men, and that women had equal right to intellectual and cultural development. This assumption is of considerable interest in that so far feminists have not really shown that female intellects differ in any crucial way from male intellects (the more things change . . .). All across America in these years, art, nature and Christian morals 'were viewed as an educative trinity whose power could shape the social good and forge a national identity'. It was not a bad theory. Art history had a long struggle to warrant its status as a separate department, and by way of defending it, Smith College's president declared that 'surely the intelligent study of Michelangelo's statues may be as profitable . . . as the dissection of a fish or flower'. In the early years at Yale, the special emphasis resembled the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, 'an academy where students learned with artists'. When Henri Focillon established the Department of the History of Art at Yale, he retained this concept.

Panofsky recalls early years at New York University, when, no rooms being available, lectures and seminars were held in the basement of the Metropolitan Museum (called 'the funeral parlour'), and public smoking was an unspeakable horror (the more things change . . .). There was a more freewheeling atmosphere at NYU, plus distinguished faculty and visiting faculty, and modern art was not scorned. Panofsky brought German-type seminars stressing reports by students. He 'generally gave everyone As'. So much for the stern rigor of the German giants. In 1933, thanks to Hitler, Panofsky joined the permanent faculty. Walter Cook was then building a fine department, declaring that 'Hitler shook the tree, and I picked up the apples'. At Columbia, Meyer Schapiro had to wait twenty-four years before being made full professor, and Millard Meiss, who came in 1934, was still an associate professor after eighteen years, and left. The Columbia freshman programme gave a prominent place to art history.

Part II of this work treats some important early scholars: Bernard Berenson as a creator

of connoisseurship with his stress on both formalism and effect, on the integration of connoisseurship and aesthetics, and on the search for the tell-tale signs of an 'artistic personality'; Arthur Kingsley Porter with his studies in medieval architecture emphasizing the use of models and the overall integration of the arts, his desire to bring great art to the masses, his advocacy of art education, his defence of art as the best mechanism to ward off American materialism and commercialism, and his late interest in Irish myth; Charles Rufus Morey with his ground-breaking studies in medieval style, his blending of factual studies with stylistic studies and interpretation, his establishing the Princeton medievalists, his high regard for symbolism and iconography, his theory that productive hypotheses must come from mastery of the material, his relating of art history to cultural and religious history, and his development of the Index of Christian Art; Fiske Kimball with his influence on the emerging field of the history of American architecture,

and Richard Offner with his concept of covert 'signature' forms (*Grundformen*), his use of Kant to ground connoisseurship in formalist aesthetics, his use of the aesthetic factors of 'typical shape' and 'common term', his search for a psychology for each artistic personality, and his Kantian insistence that there is a pre-cognitive pure aesthetic impact in terms of form which then quickly becomes material for cognitive analysis.

Part III gives further insights into developments at specific universities. The book would offer more value had it described the growth of curriculum requirements, so that we could compare now with then. It has much interesting content and shows anew how the United States is the transporter of European culture to a new world which became a powerful new Anglicized origin, patron and protector.

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CANON FORMATION: IDEOLOGY OR AESTHETIC QUALITY?

Willie van Peer

I

FOR THE past decade, discussion concerning the literary canon has been going on in 'political' terms. Because the canon is a prestigious social institution, based on selection and evaluation, it is widely thought that these are the right terms. Selecting something for inclusion in the canon (and excluding others) would seem to be political action in the very sense of the words. Is not evaluation always relative to some aims or purposes, thus readily linked to political choices? Thus has the canon come to be seen by many as the result of politically motivated actions, taking place within specific social structures that entertain an intimate relationship with power, prestige and influence. The 'test of time' ultimately becomes a test of the success of the ruling classes. One finds a clear formulation of this position in Herrnstein Smith, who writes about the dominant classes in society:

since the texts that are selected and preserved by 'time' will always tend to be those which 'fit' (and indeed have often been designed to fit) their characteristic needs, interests, resources, and purposes, that testing mechanism has its own built-in partialities.¹

Note the word 'always' in this quotation. For Herrnstein Smith and many partisans of so-called critical theory, political motives do not play a merely incidental role in the selection of canonical works, but a determinate one. The canon, in this perspective, is an instrument to stabilize the political balance in favour of those in power, and to reproduce social inequality:

Since those with cultural power tend to be members of socially, economically, and politically established classes (or to serve them and identify their own interests with theirs), the texts that survive will tend to be those that appear to reflect and reinforce establishment ideologies. (p. 51)

The claim is clear enough, then, in the direct link it postulates between politics and canon formation. Based on arguments such as these, the discussion of canonization processes has been politicized over the past years, at the expense

of considerations of quality. While earlier generations might have believed the canon to be made up of those works which have the highest literary quality, such beliefs have now been condemned as theoretically naïve and politically suspect. What should be done instead—according to this view—is to investigate the political mechanisms and implications involved in canonization processes. On the more practical level, one should ‘subvert’ the canon, either by stigmatizing canonical authors for their politically ‘wrong’ views, or by promoting other authors into the canon (mostly on the basis of their belonging to ‘oppressed’ groups), and so redress the balance, or—better still—eradicate the dominant views and practices.

An interesting aspect of formulations like the one by Herrnstein Smith is that they can be submitted to some objective test. If, for instance, two works of literature deal with the same subject matter (and are also similar in other respects), the one that reflects and reinforces prevailing ideologies of dominant groups most closely will have more chances of ending up in the canon than the one that expresses criticism of such ideologies. This is the claim I wish to inspect in this article. By looking at two texts that are close enough in their production (time and place), in their theme and subject matter, but which differ dramatically in their ideological mechanisms and content, I will investigate the extent to which the politicized view of the canon can be sustained. What the analysis will reveal is that it cannot: the text closely mirroring the prevailing ideologies of the dominant groups of its time has not even had the faintest chance of becoming canonical, while the text that radically undermined such ideologies has enjoyed canonical prestige which—although attempts have been made to downgrade its status—can hardly be denied. The case I shall examine in testing these assertions is *Romeo and Juliet*.

II

Romeo and Juliet occupy a central place among the famous love couples that Western literature has created, next to Paris and Helen, Odysseus and Penelope, Tristan and Isolde, Abelard and Héloïse, Paolo and Francesca, Lotte and Werther, and perhaps also Bogart and Bacall. But Romeo and Juliet may be the most famous couple in this company. And of all of Shakespeare’s plays, *Romeo and Juliet* is perhaps, after *Hamlet*, the most popular one. Since the time of Elizabeth I it has been performed time and again, and ‘has always enjoyed great popularity, both in the theatre and in print’.² William Hazlitt, in his ‘Prefatory Remarks’ to Oxberry’s edition of 1819 remarks that ‘[Of] all Shakespeare’s plays, this is perhaps the one that is acted, if not the oftenest, with most pleasure to the spectator’.³ This is in itself somewhat strange, since traditional Shakespeare criticism has often characterized it as an ‘immature and imperfectly constructed work’⁴ that ‘disappoints those critical expectations that the major tragedies arouse and satisfy’.⁵ In what follows, I shall argue that such a judgement must be based on a careless reading, fed by a repressed

emotionality, or a cynical disbelief in any utopian vision of the relationship between men and women. Such a reading also fails to explain the play's popularity. The platonic argument so often employed in situations like this, that the story appeals to base emotions, superficial sentiments, or vulgar taste, cannot really be taken seriously in this case. Thus the question arises how the popularity of the play should be explained.

Shakespeare wrote *Romeo and Juliet* around the years 1593/4, in a period of intense activity and stormy literary development, in which he 'explored an astonishingly wide diversity of poetic and dramatic styles; he must have written with great rapidity'.⁶ Its title refers to the main protagonists. But Shakespeare's is not the only treatment of the story of these lovers. It is almost certain that he took his lead from Arthur Brooke's rhymed novella *The Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet* (1562), itself being one of the many Elizabethan imitations and adaptations of Luigi da Porto's *Historia novellamente ritrovata di due nobili amanti* (c. 1530). If *Romeo and Juliet* are prototypical lovers in Western culture, then it must be explained why it is Shakespeare's version of their fate, and not Brooke's (or indeed any other version antedating Shakespeare) that became canonical. A detailed comparison of both texts, the one by Shakespeare and the one by Brooke, will allow us to test Herrnstein Smith's assertion that the literary canon is political in nature. In doing so, concentrating on the differences between both texts will be instructive, because they will reveal characteristics which may explain their very different reception.

First, there is a difference in genre. Shakespeare's work is a play in blank verse (with occasional rhyming parts in it), Brooke's a novella in rhymed couplets. The choice for the theatre may have been motivated by the potential for creating more powerful psychological effects. An implication to be drawn from this view is that *Romeo and Juliet* would be considerably less popular nowadays had Shakespeare written a narrative poem about them. (Note that Shakespeare did write such poetry: *The Rape of Lucrece* is an example. Its status in the canon is far less uncontroversial than that of *Romeo and Juliet*.) In other words, there seems to be a relationship between a work's genre and its potentialities for ending up in the canon. In *Romeo and Juliet* the intimacy of the lovers is depicted, not in the symbolic privacy of one's own reading, but on the stage—in the presence of an audience. Drama regularly involves the transgression of such boundaries between private and public, or between the sacred and the profane:⁷ while in *Antigone*, for instance, an external conflict is interiorized, in *Romeo and Juliet* an internal utopia is externalized. Such encounters of separate experiential domains, acted out on the stage, confront individual spectators with their own affective world, and force them to reflect on it.

Secondly, Shakespeare's play is considerably more complex than Brooke's novella. It contains more characters (and more groups of characters) and its plot contains more story lines. There is also a marked tension between public and private scenes, between 'high' and 'low' characters,⁸ and between gravity

and humour, another generic innovation of Shakespeare's.⁹ Moreover, the story line has been significantly condensed in Shakespeare's text. While the story time takes up nine months in Brooke's version, this period has been reduced to a couple of days in Shakespeare's play. The combination of complex subject-matter and a short time interval may deepen and enhance the audience's emotional involvement.

Another important distinction between these texts is narrative perspective. In Brooke's novella the point of view rests with an external narrator, who does not hide his motives for telling the story, as they are expounded quite explicitly in the preface 'To the Reader':

To this good ende, serve all ill endes, of yll begynnynges. And to this ende (good Reader) is this tragicall matter written, to describe unto thee a couple of unfortunate lovers, thralling themselves to dishonest desire, neglecting the authoritie and advise of parents and frendes, conferring their principall counsels with drunken gossypes, and superstitious friers (the naturally fitte instruments of unchastitie) attemptyng all adventures of peryll, for thattaynyng of their wished lust, usyng auricular confession (the key of whoredome, and treason) for furtheraunce of theyr purpose, abusing the honorable name of lawefull marriage, the cloke the shame of stolne contractes, finallye, by all meanes of dishonest lyfe, hastyng to most unhappy deathe.¹⁰

The lovers here are not only 'unfortunate', but also 'dishonest' (twice), and 'unhappy'. Brooke's motive for publishing his work, as announced through the voice of the narrator, is unambiguous: he wants to moralize, to warn the reader against unconditional love of the type portrayed in his story. This perspective dominates all the concrete narrative instances of the text, and makes it into a rather boring piece of propaganda, anti-erotic and anti-utopian in style and spirit.

Although in a play one does not normally have a narrative point of view, we nevertheless find in *Romeo and Juliet* indications of a voice outside the action of the play, that comments upon the events, thus providing perspective. What strikes home immediately, is that in Shakespeare's work, the moral lessons that drive Brooke's text are virtually absent. And certainly the lovers are not called 'dishonest'. The Prologue, spoken by the Chorus, which opens the play, is abundantly clear on this matter:

[Enter Chorus]

CHORUS. Two households both alike in dignity

(In fair Verona, where we lay our scene)

From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,

Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.

From forth the fatal loins of these two foes

A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life,

Whose misadventure'd piteous overthrowes

Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.
 The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love
 And the continuance of their parents' rage,
 Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,
 Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
 The which, if you with patient ears attend,
 What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend. (p. 81)

These protagonists are far from immoral. In fact, the immorality here arises from the feud between the two families: 'civil blood makes civil hands unclean'. By means of the chorus, the audience is informed that the ruin of the 'star-cross'd lovers' may be 'fearful', but that it also puts an end to the blood feud: 'Which, but their children's end, nought could remove'. The conflict between the generations is described here in terms of a recognition of youth's positive contribution, and in terms of an inexorable critique of the elder generation's stubborn egoism and materialism. If this critique can be termed moralistic or didactic, then it is so only with reference to the adult world and its lack of tolerance. This is in sharp contrast to the unreservedly positive description of the young lovers and their aims, as voiced by the chorus. That this is no 'slip of the pen' may become clear when we look at the Prologue of Act II, which, by means of unusual live metaphors, depicts the dangerous predicament the lovers find themselves in, a situation in which Romeo is forced to complain about his fate to his arch enemy,

And she steal love's sweet bait from fearful hooks
 (II, 1, 8; p. 122)

But also here the Chorus is on their side:

But passion lends them power, time means, to meet,
 Tempering extremities with extreme sweet.
 (II, 1, 13-14; p. 122)

All this makes Shakespeare's work thematically the opposite of Brooke's; one could almost interpret it as a guide book for nonconformist love.

Such nonconformity also manifests itself in other things. One such crucial moment in the play is when the protagonists renounce their parentage. This is the famous scene in which Romeo, at Juliet's request, gives up his own name:

JULIET. What's in a name? That which we call a rose
 By any other word would smell as sweet;
 So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
 Retain that dear perfection which he owes
 Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
 And for thy name, which is no part of thee,

Take all myself.

ROMEO. I take thee at thy word.
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptis'd:
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.
(II, ii, 43-51; p. 129)

It is presumably no coincidence that 'what's in a name?' is such a famous quotation from *Romeo and Juliet*, in popularity perhaps even rivalling 'to be or not to be'. It is the very essence of the unconditional love which is epitomized here: all contingent qualities of the beloved are shaken off. What remains, and what counts, is the person *qua* person and his/her involvement. Compare this with a corresponding passage in Brooke's story, where Juliet also first learns about Romeus' kinship:

The woord of Montegew, her joyes did overthrow,
And straight in steade of happy hope, dyspayre began to growe
What hap have I quoth she, to love my fathers foe?
What, am I wery of my wele? what, doe I wishe my woe?
(355-358; p. 248)

Here, after having heard the family name of her beloved, love itself is disqualified ('her joyes did overthrow'), and instead of happiness, another emotion is called forth: 'dispayre'.

Similarly, in Brooke's work the protagonists behave in a highly predictable way. They swear oaths of allegiance, as is the custom in sentimental stories:

The love I owe to you, the thrall I languish in
And how I dread to loose the gayne which I doe hope to win
And how I wishe for lyfe, not for my propre ease,
But that in it, you might I love, you honor, serve and please
Tyll dedly pangs the sprite out of the corps shall send.
And therupon he sware an othe, and so his tale had ende.
(511-516, p. 250)

Initially, Romeo also wants to engage in this conventional love ritual, but Juliet cuts him short twice:

ROMEO. Lady, by yonder blessed moon I vow,
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree-tops—
JULIET. O swear not by the moon, th'inconstant moon,
That monthly changes in her circled orb,
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.
ROMEO. What shall I swear by?
JULIET. Do not swear at all
Or if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
Which is the god of my idolatry,
And I'll believe thee.
ROMEO. If my heart's dear love—
JULIET. Well, do not swear.
(II, ii, 107-116; p. 132)

The ritual of swearing oaths has become redundant: its necessity has disappeared beyond the horizon of a love that knows no restrictions *vis-à-vis* the beloved person.

Especially instructive in this respect is also the end of both works. Brooke's story ends with harsh punishment: Juliet's nurse—in spite of her old age—is banished. And the apothecary, for selling Romeo the poison, is killed:

Thapothecary, high is hanged by the throte,
And for the paynes he tooke with him, the hangman had his cote.
(2993-2994; p. 279)

The addition that the executioner received the man's coat 'for the paynes he tooke with him' is a sinister inversion of human suffering. If we compare this to what is said about the apothecary in Shakespeare's text, then this again yields a shocking contrast:

ROMEO. There is thy gold—worse poison to men's souls,
Doing more murder in this loathsome world
Than these poor compounds that thou mayst not sell.
I sell thee poison, thou hast sold me none.
Farewell, buy food, and get thyself in flesh.
(V, ii, 80-84; p. 221)

Gold—probably the major cause of the feud between the two families—that is the real poison. The addition here is not a cynical one, but a vivifying one: 'buy food, and get thyself in flesh.'

All this means that in the two texts under consideration, love is depicted in a dramatically different way. In Shakespeare's, authenticity (of feelings, of will, of responsibility to the other) overrides conformity to transient social conventions. In Brooke's, contrarily, precisely such conventionalism is the central message: love is frightening and dangerous because it may undermine or disturb the social order. The text itself is a warning against such love. Consequently, the lovers are portrayed in Brooke's story as acting out of inner instincts. Thus the lover, through his eyes

swalloweth downe loves sweete empoysonde baite.
(219; p. 245)

Shakespeare's line from the Prologue to Act II, quoted before, closely echoes the one by Brooke:

And she steal love's sweet bait from fearful hooks.
(II, i, 8; p. 122)

However, the contrast can hardly be more significant. Apart from the fact that the line refers to different protagonists, which is irrelevant for the present purposes, the differences are:

(i) 'swalloweth downe' vs 'steal';

(ii) 'loves empoysonde baite' vs 'love's sweet bait'.

In other words: while the 'bait' is 'empoysonde' in Brooke's, it is 'sweet' in Shakespeare's text. Moreover, the metaphor of the bait is further elaborated by Shakespeare: it is not swallowed, but stolen from the hooks (absent in Brooke), dramatized as cruel instruments that threaten to destroy the lovers continuously. These 'fearful hooks' are presumably nothing but symbols for the hatred of the two families.

Finally, in Shakespeare's play love is unconditional, mutual and truly egalitarian, without calculations of profit. In Brooke's novella, the lovers are uncertain about their cause, driving them into swearing oaths of allegiance, and into reminding each other not to break these oaths. In contrast, Shakespeare's play shows us a utopian outlook on sexual relations between women and men, without stifling constraints of a rigid social order. Brooke is a moralist, demanding absolute adaptation of the individual to the prevailing social conditions, however arbitrary these may be, without critique, without reflection. I venture that it is precisely this utopian vision on love which has assured both the survival of Shakespeare's text and the obscurity of Brooke's. Only when literary texts show us values and ideas that transcend the historical situation in which they are embedded is there any guarantee against the erosion of time. How remarkably unusually this is done in Shakespeare (certainly against the background of standards enforced in Elizabethan England) emerges from the fact that a good deal of the action in the play is psychologically initiated by Juliet. We see this in her resistance to the oath ritual and her demand that Romeo give up his name, but we also witness it at another dramatic moment in the play.

Before we look at this final example of the emancipatory subject-matter of Shakespeare's play, however, it is relevant to comment briefly on yet another reason why Shakespeare's text is in the canon and Brooke's is not. It is simple enough in itself: the literary quality of the former is far superior to that of the latter. In spite of the difficulties one may experience in trying to define something as imprecise as 'literary quality', it is an undeniable factor which enters into the reading process. This means that, while it may be difficult to define literary quality in principle, it is not so difficult to demonstrate it in practice. In this respect, reading the two texts (Shakespeare's and Brooke's) several times consecutively is a highly instructive experience. If only for that reason, it would be well if we would also, from time to time, read badly written texts in literary classes. After (myself) having gone through the rather boring experience of reading Brooke's text several times, it occurred to me that those among us who deny that literary quality is related to properties of the text nevertheless themselves prefer to read first-rate literature most of the time. Perhaps these nay-sayers should be obliged (if they really mean what they say) to read third- and fourth-rate texts exclusively.

It may be possible to get around the problem of literary quality by seeing statements bearing on it as 'holistic' pronouncements, resting ultimately on specific concrete measures, which *ceteris paribus* are higher in work A than in work B. It is not inconceivable that canonical works of literature score higher on many such separate quality measures, which individually are neither necessary nor sufficient for making the text a good piece of literature, but which, when added together, cumulatively create the effect we usually label as 'quality'. Especially when hundreds of such separate parameters add up, the effect can be quite powerful. Some of these parameters have already been mentioned. To these could be added the originality and boldness of Shakespeare's use of language. We have already seen this at work when we discussed the metaphors of poison, bait and hooks. Many such instances can be quoted to corroborate the general superiority of Shakespeare's text still further. Thus, for instance, the representation of Romeo's perception and feelings when he first sets eyes on Juliet:

O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright.
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
As a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear—
(I, v, 43-45; p. 116)

This certainly is a remarkable string of metaphors to depict one's beloved. First, Juliet is pictured as a teacher seen in front of a class of torches, instructing them how to burn brightly (herself being better at it than any of them), then Juliet is seen as a star, hanging on someone's—the night's—cheek, adorning the night as a precious gem adorns the earlobe of an Ethiopian. These are images of a force and vividness one will rarely—if ever—encounter in Brooke's text. Compare, for instance, the corresponding passage there:

At length he saw a mayd, right fayre of perfect shape
Which Theseus, or Paris would have chosen to their rape,
Whom erst he never sawe, of all she pleasde him most
(197-199; p. 244)

To say nothing of the appallingly violent tone of the scene ('rape'), the description is painfully trite ('right fayre of perfect shape'), and particularly poor (and predictable) in rendering the emotionality of the experience involved ('she pleasde him most').

But the powerful expression of emotion in Shakespeare's text is not limited to the use of metaphors. Other, more global, compositional devices are at work. If one studies in somewhat more detail the prologues to acts I and II that we have already looked at, one will notice that they have been composed in the form of a (Shakespearean) sonnet. Compare in this respect also the marked effect found in Shakespeare's text of the change from blank verse into

atically some marked differences emerged between the ways in which both works shaped the history of the protagonists. Thematically, the fundamental equality of the lovers, the proportionally more prominent role given to Juliet in guiding the action, as well as the emphasis put on authenticity of the protagonists' emotions, make Shakespeare's play considerably more attractive than Brooke's didactic moralism. Formally, the quality of Shakespeare's text is many times superior to that of Brooke's: its originality and perceptivity out-rank Brooke's specimen of doggerel verse.

But what about the critics? They have spared no effort to remove the sting from the play, for instance by reading it as an admonition not to transgress beyond the existing conventions of love and sexuality. Kiernan Ryan¹¹ has, to my mind, convincingly demonstrated that literary critics of the twentieth century have tried hard to deny, minimize, or repress the play's central theme. The protagonists die, after all . . . To interpret this as a condemnation of their love is remarkable, to say the least, for in doing so, one reduces Shakespeare's work to that of Brooke. That nevertheless actors continued to perform Shakespeare's work, and readers continued to read Shakespeare (and not Brooke), shows how important readers' judgements are in the process of canonization—and how little critics may achieve in this respect. Hence the institutional factors in canon formation may be less important than many would have them be. Even a relatively large-scale operation by literary critics to suppress the play's critical, egalitarian, and emancipatory force could not stop (male and female) audiences and readers from being moved by the model that Juliet and her husband present to us, i.e. a sexual relationship which is unconditional, and in which men and women meet on the basis of true tenderness, faith and fairness. So long as human nature and social structures impede the realization of this utopian vision, so long will Romeo and Juliet enjoy a high rank in the canon of famous lovers, maybe even against the teachings and tastes of the critics. But then literary critics are often people who 'kiss by the book'.

The previous analysis establishes one thing rather clearly: it falsifies the claim made by Herrnstein Smith and others, that the canon is made up of only works that are in the interests of those in power. If indeed the dominant groups in society did select texts to be included in the canon because of their upholding, legitimizing, and furthering the ideology of these very same groups, then Brooke's work should have been in the canon, not Shakespeare's. We have seen that the opposite is the case, and that it was a work that radically undermined the values held by traditional patriarchal society in Elizabethan times that was made canonical, while a work defending and celebrating many of these values (materialism, revenge, unconditional adherence to one's own clan, the exclusion of all otherness, etc.) has been virtually forgotten except by the literary historian and the Shakespeare specialist. It may be, of course, that one objects to Shakespeare's ideas, that one is not in favour of such a utopian vision of love relationships. If that is the case, then it would be good

to say so. To quote Lerner on this matter: 'If you are sceptical whether the power relations between men and women can ever be suspended, I take it that you are sceptical whether true love is ever possible.'¹² What this analysis does show is that the claim that the canon is composed of works chosen out of political motives is simply wrong. As the case of *Romeo and Juliet* amply demonstrates, the canon may contain works that are absolutely at odds with the central values of the traditional society from which they emerged. I do not see how the Foucauldian approach can honestly deal with such a falsification of its claims without at the same time having to give up one of its most basic tenets, i.e. that texts are always imbued with the power of dominant groups in society. Even the most central literary texts of Western culture, those in the canon, may go directly against the grain of that culture's ideology. Any assertion to the contrary is simply false.

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NOTE

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF KANT'S PURE AESTHETIC JUDGEMENT

Paul Crowther

IN RECENT years *The Critique of Judgement* has generated a body of interpretative scholarship, that begins to compare with that accruing to the first *Critique*, and Kant's writings on moral philosophy. However, this body of work has so far been largely interpretative in a narrow sense—concentrating on issues pertaining to the structure and internal problematics of Kant's arguments. There have been few sustained attempts¹ to articulate the broader significance of his views, on the lines, say of P. F. Strawson's and Henry Allison's reworking of the first *Critique*, or Onora O'Neill's deployment of Kant's moral philosophy.

In this paper, I shall take a few modest steps in this broader direction. Specifically, I shall clarify the general philosophical significance of Kant's approach to the pure aesthetic judgement.

As a prelude to this main task, it is worth offering a brief overview of Kant's general preoccupations in the third *Critique*. First, his basic strategy is to bridge the divide between humanity's natural mechanistically determined being and its capacity for free moral existence. Kant's reasons for doing this are complex, as are the principles whereby the gulf between nature and freedom is bridged. In the most general terms, however, the key connecting term is that of teleology. On the one hand, the teeming complexity of organic nature compels us to think of that world *as if* it were a purposive and hierarchical system produced by artifice, so as to be accessible to the ends of human cognition. On the other hand, thinking of nature in these hierarchical purposive terms also leads to the idea of some ultimate purpose or 'final end' of the system as a whole. For Kant, this final end is the existence of free rational moral beings.²

Aesthetic factors play a decisive role in this teleological mediation between nature and freedom. To show this one must make a basic contrast (which I shall build on as this paper progresses). Ordinary teleological judgements involve some natural item being related to the form (or 'end') which defines items of that kind. Mediation by a specific concept is *always* involved. The pure aesthetic judgement, in contrast, is irreducibly singular. Here an item is not judged as purposive through instantiating a specific 'concept of an end'. Rather in our perception of the item's phenomenal structure, basic cognitive

capacities which are essential to judgement *per se*, are brought into a free and mutually stimulating interaction. This interaction is teleological in a subjective sense, in so far as it is conducive to the end or purpose of cognition in general. Indeed, for even more complex reasons, it also tends to make us more susceptible to moral feeling.

Now from this schematic overview it should already be clear that, for Kant, the pure aesthetic judgement has both a distinctive character and structure, and plays an important role in linking nature, cognition, and freedom. In the main body of this discussion, I shall try to illuminate (both sympathetically and critically) the general worth of Kant's approach. It should be noted, however, that the discussion will focus almost exclusively on the pure aesthetic judgement in its most basic form—the enjoyment of natural *beauty*. (The question of sublimity and fine art, are much more complex, and I have addressed them at length elsewhere.)³

In Part I, then, I shall clarify the major logical characteristics of the pure aesthetic judgement, namely its *disinterestedness*. Particular attention will be paid to rectifying a common misconception of this notion. In Part II, I will analyse the ontological ground of the pure aesthetic judgement *vis-à-vis* the interaction of cognitive capacities mentioned above. It will be argued that this interaction both focuses on (what I shall call) the possibility of conceptualization, and has viability beyond Kant's specific philosophical position. Finally, in Part III, I will develop a line of argument indicated by Kant in relation to the moral significance of the aesthetic. In so developing it, I will show that whilst it does not issue in an outcome which would have been acceptable to Kant, it does, nevertheless, show that the pure aesthetic judgement has a primordial significance. It embodies and discloses fundamental truths about the human mode of inhering in the world.

I

For Kant, our capacity to experience pleasure or displeasure has three major varieties.⁴ The first of these is the 'agreeable'. Such sensations are occasioned pathologically, that is to say, by the causal impact of specific stimuli upon the sense organs. They are, in essence, subjective responses, which hinge purely on matters of personal preference and aversion. Agreeable sensations, in other words, serve no significant cognitive function in themselves.

The second major basis of pleasure and displeasure in Kant is determined by an item's or state of affair's relation to the 'good'. This involves locating the item (or whatever) in relation to networks of ideas and principles. Something is good in the sense of being a means to a desired end; or, more directly, through satisfying general criteria which define quality and desirability in things of that kind. Pleasure in the good, in other words, always presupposes that the particular item is judged in relation to its utility for, or conformity to, some function or standard which is, in a sense, *external* to it.

We thus arrive at what, for Kant, is the third distinctive source of pleasure and displeasure, namely the pure aesthetic judgement. The judgement of beauty is the major example of this.⁵ Kant's initial formulation of it is by way of a contrast with the other two sources of pleasure. His way of articulating this distinction, however, is extremely contorted, and, in many respects, confusing. The validity of the distinction can, nevertheless, be viably expressed using Kant's own terms as follows. Our pleasure in the agreeable and the good are 'interested' modes of enjoyment in so far as they depend upon the 'real existence' of the object which occasions them. In order, for example, to enjoy the taste of a certain kind of food, the food really must be as good as it looks. The appearance of agreeableness is not enough. The object must actually possess the physical properties which will occasion the agreeable sensations in us. This dependence upon real existence also characterizes our pleasure in the good. If something is good because it satisfies some broader set of functional or evaluative criteria, then the mere appearance of satisfying such functions or standards will not do. The item's goodness is determined by its satisfaction of truth conditions, i.e. broader considerations appertaining to 'real existence'.

In the case of the pure aesthetic judgement, however, matters are rather different. As Kant puts it,

It is quite plain that in order to say that the object is *beautiful*, and to show that I have taste, everything turns on the meaning which I can give to this representation, and not on any factor which makes me dependent on the real existence of the object.⁶

The point here is that our pleasure in beauty is purely a function of how the object *appears* to the senses. What kind of thing the object is, its relevance for our practical interests, indeed whether the object is real or not, are questions which have no necessary bearing on our enjoyment of its mere appearance. In its rootedness in the immediate sensible particular, therefore, our pleasure can be characterized as *disinterested*.

Kant's major point of philosophical substance, then, is that disinterestedness is a *logical* characteristic which separates pure aesthetic judgements from those of the agreeable and good. Such aesthetic judgements are, in logical terms, indifferent to the real existence of the object. It is, however, important to be clear about the scope and significance of this claim. In respect of it, Kant has been very badly served by subsequent tradition. Formalists such as Clive Bell, Edmund Bullough, and Harold Osborne, for example, have, in effect, interpreted the disinterested aspect of aesthetic judgement as though it were in essence psychological—a kind of detached attitude or mental stance wherein one purges oneself of all considerations deriving from 'real existence'. Many critics of disinterestedness such as George Dickie, Richard Shusterman, and

manifold Marxist and feminist theoreticians, have interpreted it in similar terms. This has led them to the view that there simply 'ain't no such thing' or, indeed (in the case of Marxists), that the very idea of a detached 'disinterested' standpoint is itself ideologically 'interested' to the highest degree.⁷

Now there are elements in Kant—such as his additional characterization of the pure aesthetic judgement as 'contemplative'—which lend some weight to this interpretative tradition. These, however, pale into insignificance alongside Kant's—wholly valid—logic of negation. The key *logical* significance of the pure aesthetic judgement lies in what it does *not* presuppose in order to be enjoyed. To take pleasure in the way things appear to the senses is *just* that. We may find that our being in a position to experience such pleasure, has required a certain path through life; it may also be that a lot of factual knowledge and practical considerations impinge upon our pleasure. However, such factors are not *logical* preconditions of our enjoying beauty: they are contingent elements. We do not *have to* take account of them in appreciating formal qualities for their own sake.

That being said, however, it may be that in its very contrast to forms of 'interested' pleasure, it is possible, in some circumstances, that the disinterestedness of the pure aesthetic judgement takes on a felt, psychological character. This would have no bearing on the judgement's logical status *qua* aesthetic, but it might be taken as disclosing the aesthetic's link to broader primordial factors in the human condition. This is a possibility which I shall consider in Part III. Before that, the ontological ground of the pure aesthetic judgement must be considered. It is to this I now turn.

II

First, Kant sees our pleasure in the pure aesthetic judgement as arising from a harmony of the cognitive faculties. He observes that 'a representation whereby an object is given, involves, in order that it may become a source of cognition at all, *imagination* for bringing together the manifold of intuition, and *understanding* for the unity of the concept uniting the representations'.⁸ This, of course, is a familiar tenet from the first *Critique*.⁹ The particular act of judgement involves the subsumption or discrimination of sensible particulars under a concept or concepts. This itself is only possible through the exercise of our imagination's powers of attention, recall, and projection. The generation of images enables us to relate an item to past, present, and possible appearances. It is the basis of a unified temporal horizon which, in tandem with the understanding's application of concepts, stabilizes the manifold, and enables the item to be identified as such and such a thing. This *ability to generate images*—to create conditions of temporal continuity in the sensible manifold—is what Kant calls 'productive imagination'. In its normal highly specific *employments*, it is tightly directed by a relevant concept, and functions in a fundamentally 'reproductive' way. For example, in conceptualizing something

as a 'dog', our application of the concept will be informed (tacitly or explicitly) by expectations based on associations between the present creature and our previous experience of dog-type appearances and behaviour.

The co-operation of understanding and imagination in its reproductive function, then, is the basis of what might be called *normal specificatory judgements*. These are acts of subsumption or discrimination which affirm that specific relations hold. Such judgements have definiteness of sense, and are the basis of everyday cognitive life. They exemplify and exist in a context which might be characterized as *discursively rigid*, in so far as they locate us in a realm which involves the application of definite concepts to definite objects on the basis of definite practical interests or physiological needs.

The case of the pure aesthetic judgement is very different. In engaging with a beautiful form Kant suggests that

The cognitive powers brought into play by this representation are here engaged in a free play, since no definite concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition. Hence the mental state in this representation must be one of a feeling of the free play of the powers of representation . . .¹⁰

This raises two questions, namely, what exactly is involved in this free play, and why should it be pleasurable? I shall address these questions in turn.

First, we will recall from Part I that Kant characterizes the pure aesthetic judgement as 'apart from any concept', but in the foregoing remark he claims that it involves 'no definite concept'. Now if Kant's theory is to do any useful philosophical work, we must read these contrasting characterizations as differences of emphasis rather than substance. For whilst (in order for Kant to be consistent with his overall account of judgement) the pure aesthetic mode must have some conceptual content, it must also have much more than *just* conceptual content. This means that judgement must here function in something other than its normal specificatory mode. On these terms, the 'apart from any concept' characterization should be taken simply as an overstated emphasis of the pure aesthetic judgement's exceptional status. A better way of putting it would be to say that such judgements focus *on the possibility of a manifold's conceptualizability per se*, rather than its relation to a definite concept.

But how are we to make this more specific? One important clue is provided by Kant's emphases on the role of the productive imagination. Consider the following passage:

If . . . imagination must in the judgement of taste be regarded as in its freedom, then, to begin with, it is not taken as reproductive, as in its subjection to the laws of association, but as productive and exerting an activity of its own (as originator of arbitrary forms of possible intuitions).¹¹

To make sense of this, we must recall how in the normal specificatory judgement, the relation between imagination and understanding is discursively

rigid. Now a phenomenal form—such a bird of paradise's plumage, or an arabesque—can be described in just these rigid terms. We identify them as formal configurations which are characteristic of this particular kind of bird, or this particular kind of ornament. However, to judge them as *beautiful*, entails that these forms have relations of unity and diversity which are amenable to sustained cognitive exploration. In discriminating the relation between parts and whole in the bird's plumage, for example, what may engross us is the way the overall shape contains and directs sequences of colour and texture, and other contours within the manifold. We explore the various phenomenal sub-unities in relation to both one another and the structure of the whole. In the case of the arabesque, matters can be even more complex. The visual rhythm of the pattern may suggest continuations beyond that which is immediately given. We find formal cues which enable us to, as it were, rhapsodically continue the rhythm in imagination. Again, in exploring the way in which one colour limits or tends to negate or neutralize other colours, we might see and develop this as a *process* of formal interaction, taking the given configuration as one moment in a continuous movement which might be traced back to imaginary previous stages, or forward to future ones. Yet again, the *gestalt* character of specific forms within the ornament may be such that we can see them as either foreground or background elements. With each switch from one to the other, the whole structure of virtual space is reconfigured into new possibilities.

Now, as Kant's celebrated example of the house in the first *Critique's* Second Analogy shows, the unity of an object—as opposed to an event—can be perceptually apprehended in a random order. As he puts it 'my perceptions could begin with the apprehension of the roof and end with the basement, or could begin from below and end above; and I could similarly apprehend the manifold of the empirical intuition either from right to left or from left to right'.¹² Kant further suggests that whilst the subjective successions of perceptions here is 'arbitrary', 'it does not prove anything as to the manner in which the manifold is connected in the object'.¹³ Hence, whilst the order of our perceptions in relation to an object is arbitrary, this arbitrariness has no bearing on its specifically objective unity. However, in perceiving the beauty of a bird's plumage or an arabesque, very different considerations hold. For the *aesthetic unity* of the object is a function of the interplay between phenomenal form and the different *possible* avenues of cognitive exploration and development which it can open up. An element of randomness in judgement, in other words, is partially *constitutive* of aesthetic unity. In contrast with the objective form of manifolds of sensible intuition, we are dealing here with 'arbitrary forms of possible intuitions'. The imagination is not tied to the retention or projection of appearance on exact associational lines dictated by a specific concept. It is, rather, able to function at the level of its definitive being—as a productive capacity which creates possibilities of unity in the manifold.

This extraordinary contrast between the discursive rigidity of empirical perception, and the freedom of aesthetic judgement has not, I think, been at all properly developed in the existing interpretative literature.¹⁴ One reason for this is that in the third *Critique* Kant has hardly anything explicit to say about those 'pure concepts of the understanding' or 'categories' which are so decisive in the first *Critique*. However, they do play a crucial role implicitly to the degree that the pure aesthetic judgement serves to 'refer a given representation to cognition in general'.¹⁵ This is why, earlier on, I suggested that such judgements focus on the possibility of a manifold's conceptualizability. The evocation of the productive imagination noted above demands not empirical concepts, but the categories—and, especially, the quantitative and qualitative ones. These are (respectively) unity, plurality, and totality, and reality, negation, and limitation. In judging beautiful form—as I tried to show in my examples—these categories interact in loose, experimental, explorative ways, allowing a similar flexibility in the way imagination holds on to, and projects the manifold. In one sense the beautiful configuration is cognitively unstable. However, this is not a loss of intelligibility—a kind of cognitive breakdown. Rather, we have, as it were, cognition *in the making*. Imagination and understanding rediscover their original and mutual formative power through creating possibilities of conceptualizability. The very fabric and impetus of cognitive life in its more general sense is renewed and replenished. (I shall return to this point at length in Part III.)

For Kant, all these considerations establish the pure aesthetic judgement as teleological in a subjective sense. On the one hand, the judgement has 'formal finality' in so far as the beautiful configuration appears *as if* it had been created for the express purpose of stimulating cognitive exploration; on the other hand, the free harmonious interaction of understanding and imagination which it brings about is 'subjectively final' in relation to cognition generally. This means that in renewing cognition's structural basis, it can be regarded as teleologically significant in relation to the attainment of knowledge—even though it is not, in itself, a claim to knowledge. In its fulfilment of this role, Kant sees the pure aesthetic judgement as intrinsically pleasurable. In his words 'it involves an inherent causality, that, namely, of *preserving a continuance* of a state of the representation itself and the active engagement of the cognitive powers without ulterior aim. We dwell on the contemplation of the beautiful because this contemplation strengthens and reproduces itself.'¹⁶

Now even if we do not accept Kant's epistemology and teleology *in toto*, his approach to the pure aesthetic judgement remains a viable one. It is, for example, difficult to make sense of the term 'experience' at all, without presupposing basic cognitive capacities whose structure and function is at least akin to those which Kant attributes to imagination and understanding. And, even if we do not accept Kant's list of categories and the significance he assigns to them, the specific categories mentioned earlier do play a key role in our

characterizations of aesthetic form. They are also key concepts, generally, in the way we think about the world. Given all these points, it is reasonable to claim that Kant's grounding of the pure aesthetic judgement in the harmony of basic cognitive capacities, is an adequate general explanation of why natural and simple decorative beauty engages us, and gives us a distinctive disinterested form of pleasure. Equally importantly, it also offers a basis (in a way which few—if any—other accounts do) for thinking through the question of why, in comparison to other forms of value and pleasure, the aesthetic is given—and is, indeed, entitled to—a privileged status. I shall consider some of the ramifications of this in my final section.

III

As we saw in the introduction to this discussion, Kant's strategy in the third *Critique* is not only to clarify the distinctive structure of aesthetic judgement, but to locate it in terms of a broader project—namely, the linking of our natural and our moral being. Having, therefore, clarified the logical and ontological basis of the pure aesthetic judgement, the question arises as to whether there is anything to be said for this broader strategy. I would suggest that there is, albeit not in the specific sense that Kant desires. There is a primordial significance to the aesthetic, which can clarify the point about privileged status alluded to at the end of the last section. It can also be reached via a route signposted by Kant himself, but we will, alas, have to part company with—if not him, then at least some aspects of his main philosophical position, along the way.

To commence, Kant attempts to link aesthetic judgement and morality through two major, and sometimes overlapping, strategies. The first of these consists in the fact that in striving to achieve *universal* consensus in aesthetic judgement we create conditions which will be generally favourable to the development of moral awareness. This approach is intimately bound up with the deduction of the universal validity of pure aesthetic judgements. Since I have examined this at length elsewhere, I shall not pursue it further now.¹⁷ Instead, let us consider the second of Kant's approaches. It hinges on questions of 'supersensible' or '*a priori*' causality. The claim is, in the most general terms, that since both moral feeling and pure aesthetic pleasure are determined by factors—namely, reason and the cognitive faculties—which are the very basis of human experience, then, this causality is of a privileged order. Indeed, a capacity to feel pure aesthetic pleasure will render us all the more susceptible to moral feeling.¹⁸ As Kant puts it,

Taste makes, as it were, the transition from the charm of sense to habitual moral interest possible without too violent a leap, for it represents the imagination, even in its freedom, as amenable to a final determination for understanding, and teaches us to find, even in sensuous object, a free [i.e. disinterested] delight apart from a charm of sense.¹⁹

Now whilst Kant does not fill in the details of exactly how the pure aesthetic judgement can play this role, he does explicitly connect it here to the link between such judgements and freedom. Let us, therefore, construct an argument which is consistent with Kant's basic insight here, and then see where it leads.

First, he often treats the pure aesthetic judgement's harmony of imagination and understanding on an analogy with physiological interactions—they stimulate and enliven one another in a way that is good for our cognitive health generally. However, whilst a dimension of positive feeling is the causal consequence of this interaction, the causal dimension is not really paramount in the aesthetic judgement. Indeed, the cognitive exploration which is at the heart of such judgement is not a causal relation at all. It is a manifestation of the individual's free choice in terms of how he or she adapts to, and develops the different perceptual possibilities presented by a formal configuration. In such judgements, we act independently of the mechanistic causal framework of nature; but at the same time our relation to nature is enriched. The sensible world provides both an object, and (in the pleasurable response) a motive for continuing to search out new possibilities for free cognitive exploration.

Now what makes all this amenable to Kant's overall strategy is that, for him, morality itself is the most developed expression of freedom. However, (as Kant is at great pains to show in the *Critique of Practical Reason*,²⁰ especially) because we are finite and imperfectly rational creatures, there is always the possibility that, even in following our moral duty, we are in fact acting from unacknowledged *feelings* of self-interest or fellow-feeling. Natural impulses, in other words, impinge on and cloud the sincerity of our moral motives. But since, by definition, human beings are both free and rational, *and* natural and animal, this seems to be an impossible conflict—a contradiction at the very heart of our being. Can we not overcome this? Is there not some mediating term between the demands of our moral being, and our situatedness in nature? Of course there is—the pure aesthetic judgement. In it, morality's key precondition (freedom) is in harmony with natural factors on the lines noted above. Here at least we can be sure that nature is a stimulus for, rather than an obstacle to, freedom.

Given these points, the pure aesthetic judgement might be seen as conducive to morality through its role in what Dieter Henrich has called (in another context) Kant's 'moral image of the world'. According to this doctrine (as Henrich puts it) a moral agent 'accepts together with the validity of the moral law, a view of what the world is like: its constitution must be such that its moral effects are not indifferent to, or even counteract, morally motivated actions'.²¹ Now as we saw earlier, for Kant, concrete moral practice is in constant conflict with natural impulses; but if this antagonism were total, it would militate against the possibility of 'habitual moral interest'. In the freedom of the pure aesthetic judgement, however, we attain in the very midst

of nature, something which is higher. This means that however hostile to morality nature may seem, the hostility is not absolute. In the pure aesthetic judgement, our animality, if not transcended, is at least tempered: and in this tempering, we can take nature itself to bear the imprint of a higher order of things. It thus takes its place in our moral image of the world.

Now in constructing this argument I have tried to focus ideas found throughout the *Critique of Judgement*. In so doing, I have opened a direction of thinking wherein the broader significance of the aesthetic begins to emerge. There is, however, a decisive problem. It is this: for Kant the burden of emphasis in moral existence falls on obstacles and responsibilities in relation to the expression of freedom. In aesthetic experience it does not. Might we not say, then, that this very fact may be one that disposes us to elevate the pleasures of the aesthetic as on overriding end-in-itself. In comparison with morality it is an easy option. Hence, whilst the pure aesthetic judgement might figure in a moral image of the world, it could just as easily, if not more so, incline us to a life of self-indulgent or indolent contemplation, wherein the demands of moral duty were the least of our preoccupations. This would, of course, be anathema to Kant.

A second (less pressing) problem also arises. For even if we allow the Kantian link between pure aesthetic judgement and a moral image of the world we must ask what are the conditions which, in practice, lead us to make this link? Under what circumstances does the pure aesthetic judgement *disclose* its broader significance?

To clarify this problem, I shall now redirect Kant's basic strategy, by focusing on freedom rather than his notion of morality. First, then, the significance of freedom is not simply as a logical precondition of moral existence, it is a pervasive factor which determines, in different ways, the entire fabric of human value and endeavour. As we saw in Part II, this even extends as far as the structure of cognition itself, in so far as the pure aesthetic judgement hinges on the exploration of possibilities of conceptualizability. By this I mean that imagination and understanding here function in their ontologically primordial form as free formative powers, which, in concert, construct the sensible manifold. This is, in effect, a repetition of the ontogenesis of experience itself, and it indicates an even deeper significance to the aesthetic. One might put it like this. An infant interacts with its environment on the basis of curiosity, searching out and exploring different patterns of relation and order. In this very basic mode of cognitive activity it is guided by a propensity to mimic, and the encouragement (or otherwise) of adults. The motives for this exploration cannot, I think, be reduced to these guiding factors. Mimicry, for example, may be an innate propensity, but the complex uses to which it is put bespeak a deeper motive—namely, the exploration of possibilities of order for their own sake. Adult guidance and, indeed, the desire to please adults, are important factors in determining infant behaviour, but they do not exclusively

determine it. Left to itself, the infant will want to do things other than simply satisfy its physiological needs and the demands of adults. What I am suggesting, then, is that the motive for non-determined infant cognitive behaviour is aesthetic. It is a curiosity-for-its-own-sake which can be characterized as disinterested in so far as the infant has not yet fully articulated the categorial basis of either the world or its own self. It is playing with possibilities of order and appearance, which, in conjunction with the other mediating factors, enable a sense of reality—a systematic calibration of understanding and imagination—to be eventually achieved. Through free aesthetic exploration in concert with other natural and socializing factors, the infant gradually correlates its body with both the unity of the world and the unity of its own perspective upon it as an individual self.

Now if this account is correct, a very crude and basic mode of aesthetic judgement is a natural factor in the infant's development, and is deeply implicated in the formation of a categorial framework. It is crucial to emphasize, however, that we do not find the pure aesthetic judgement pleasurable *because* it repeats the formative stages of experience. Rather it is the free formative activity itself which is pleasurable. The significance of the repetition consists in the way in which the individual moment of aesthetic pleasure *exemplifies* a mode of experiential formation, which reaches back into, and is decisive for, the origins of individual self-consciousness.

On these terms, then, the pure aesthetic judgement has a primordial significance. Through its cognitive explorations we are immersed in a world of sensible complexity, yet we project its possibilities of unity on very much our own terms. This *free-belonging* to the world is further deepened by the way in which individual judgements exemplify the formative origins of experience. However, we now face the minor problem raised earlier in relation to Kant—namely, under what circumstances is this broader significance disclosed? The answer is, fortunately, not a difficult one. It consists in the contrast between such judgements and the patterns of everyday life. In Part II, it will be recalled, I used the notion of normal judgement's discursive rigidity to secure a contrast with the freedom of the aesthetic variety. This is much more than a logical distinction. In ordinary practical and cognitive existence, our freedom is channelled into the means/end nexus of our projects, and the procuring of the means to satisfy basic physiological needs. In this context, freedom is, as it were, caught up and hidden by the formats and structures of its realization. The pure aesthetic judgement, can stand out as special—as something higher—by its negation of this context. Again, it will be recalled that, in Part I, I used Kant's notion of disinterestedness to secure a logical distinction between aesthetic and other forms of pleasure. I further suggested, however, that a kind of psychological disinterestedness might also be found a role. That role is here. In its contrast with the 'interested' patterns and pleasures of everydayness, the aesthetic can be felt as a release and a renewal. It returns us to

something fundamental, even if we cannot put what this something is into an adequate verbal description.

Given these points, one might say that the primordial significance of the pure aesthetic judgement is disclosed *intuitively* through its felt contrast with the routines of everyday life. 'Intuitively' is, of course, a treacherous term. It can mean insights whose emergence we cannot explain, or ones whose emergence we do not have the means to explain. In this latter case, the intuition may be the result of something so intimately and deeply familiar that we simply never notice it, or something so complex that we do not even care to try and fathom it out. Our intuition concerning the special status of the pure aesthetic judgement has, perhaps, something of both these aspects. It seems to relate to factors which are simultaneously simple and deep. The intrinsic pleasure of the judgement leads us to an intuitive sense of its having a higher significance.

The importance of this consists in a final point. In much contemporary writing there is a tendency to treat the aesthetic as if it is a mere class- or gender-based preference which has been unwarrantably privileged as a higher pleasure through its role in the social power structure of certain western societies. (Pierre Bourdieu's well-known critique of Kant is a paradigm case of this approach.)² However, the impulse to embellish, to ornament, to adorn, and to ritualize gesture—as in the case of dance—seems to be a ubiquitous feature of all human societies. Superficially this might seem to favour the rather reductionist view just noted. On these terms, we would argue that aesthetic embellishments and adornments (etc.) are found pleasing because of their efficacy in certain kinds of functional or ritual context. But against this, we must ask, why should aesthetic elements be regarded as efficacious in such contexts? Why is it that they are taken to add something to their contexts of occurrence? If it is because of some putative magical significance, again we must ask what is it about the aesthetic which *lends itself* to being interpreted in such terms? At some point in this analysis, we will be returned to the brute fact that the aesthetic is both a mode of pleasure inherent in the fabric of self-consciousness itself, and one which (however vaguely or intuitively) discloses and deepens our sense of free-belonging to the world. Kant's basic aesthetic theory enables us to think both these aspects through. This is the decisive significance of his approach to the pure aesthetic judgement.

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REFERENCES

- ¹ One notable exception is Antony Savile in his *The Test of Time* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1982) and other works
- ² For an alternative interpretation of the 'final end', see R. K. Elliott's 'The Unity of Kant's Critique of Judgement', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 1968, pp. 244–259
- ³ See for example my *The Kantian Sublime*.

From Morality to Art (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) and Chapters 3, 7, and 8 of my *Critical Aesthetics and Postmodernism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993)

⁴ In this section, I will be addressing Kant's arguments as adumbrated in §§ 1–5 of Book I of *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. J. C. Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973). A very detailed and penetrating alternative reading of Kant's treatment of pleasure and disinterestedness can be found in Chapter 5 of Paul Guyer's *Kant and the Claims of Taste* (Cambridge and London: Harvard U.P., 1979). Like many other commentators on Kant, Guyer's approach to these topics tends to multiply the internal problematics of Kant's position, in a way that loses sight of the general validity of specific points.

⁵ The pure aesthetic judgement encompasses both beauty and sublimity. Kant sometimes uses the term 'judgement of taste' in relation to beauty. I prefer, however, to avoid this in so far as it is used most oppositely in relation to the predication of beauty as a characteristic of specific forms, rather than to our taking pleasure in the beautiful *per se*. Since, further, I am not considering sublimity in this discussion, my use of the term 'pure aesthetic judgement' should be taken as synonymous with 'enjoyment of the beautiful'.

⁶ Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, op. cit. p. 43.

⁷ For a critical discussion of some of the general issues involved here see my review article 'Sociological Imperialism and the Field of Cultural Production; The Case of Bourdieu' in *Theory, Culture and Society*, Vol. II, No. 1, 1994, pp. 155–169.

⁸ Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, op. cit. p. 43.

⁹ See especially the first edition version of 'The Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding' in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Kemp-Smith (London: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 128–150.

¹⁰ Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, op. cit. p. 58.

¹¹ Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, op. cit. p. 86.

¹² Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, op. cit. p. 221.

¹³ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, op. cit. p. 222.

¹⁴ This is true even of such thorough and impressive treatments as are found in

Guyer's book (op. cit.) and Hannah Ginsborg's *The Role of Taste in Kant's Theory of Cognition* (Cambridge and London: Harvard U.P., 1988). Interestingly, Dieter Henrich does take an approach with some similarities to mine, in terms of his notion of 'the conditions of a possible conceptualisation in general' (see his *Aesthetic Judgement and the Moral Image of the World*, Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1992). However, he does not bring in fully the role of the categories. Indeed, like Guyer and Ginsborg (and many others) his interpretative attentiveness to the details of Kant's text is not matched by a corresponding phenomenological attentiveness to the concrete experience of beautiful configurations. If, however, we are interested in the validity of Kant's claim, this latter consideration should be of decisive importance.

¹⁵ Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, op. cit. p. 58.

¹⁶ Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, op. cit. p. 64.

¹⁷ A full discussion of some of the issues involved can be found in my *The Kantian Sublime*, op. cit. pp. 60–70.

¹⁸ See for example § 42 of the *Critique of Judgement* (Book I). Kant assumes that since both aesthetic and moral feeling are the result of an 'a priori causality', then the cultivation of the former will *ipso facto* be conducive to experiencing the latter. As a casual story this is simply an assumption. To give it philosophical 'bite' we need an account of the complex intentional object of aesthetic pleasure in its relation to morality. This is what I provide in the main body of my text.

¹⁹ Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, op. cit. p. 225.

²⁰ See for example Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. and ed. L. W. Beck, (New York and London: Garland Publishing Co., 1976), pp. 220–221.

²¹ Henrich, op. cit., pp. 24–25.

²² See for example Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. R. Nice (London: Routledge and Kegan-Paul, 1984), pp. 485–500.

THE CONDITION TO WHICH ALL ART ASPIRES: REFLECTIONS ON PATER ON MUSIC

Patricia Herzog

I

'ALL ART', Walter Pater famously said, 'constantly aspires towards the condition of music'.¹ Yet of music itself Pater tells us nothing. Not in 'The School of Giorgione', where this statement occurs, nor anywhere else in *The Renaissance*, his slight but enormously influential volume of essays on Renaissance painting, sculpture and poetry, does Pater give the reader any indication of a type of music or specific musical work. The closest we get is a remark in the essay, 'Joachim du Bellay', about the subordination of content to rhyme and meter in the *Pleiad*, a group of sixteenth-century French poets prominently represented by du Bellay and Pierre de Ronsard: 'To combine these two kinds of music [rhyme and meter] in a new school of French poetry, to make verse which should scan and rhyme as well, to search out and harmonize the measure of every syllable, and unite it to the swift, fitting, swallow-like motion of rhyme, to penetrate their poetry with a double music—this was the ambition of the *Pleiad*'.² The composer Goudimel (c. 1514–1572) is also mentioned in the essay on du Bellay, as setting Ronsard's poems to music, but there is no discussion of any of his songs. We are only told that what is 'quite in earnest' about the poets of the *Pleiad* is their eagerness for Goudimel's music, an eagerness 'of greater compass perhaps than words can possibly yield . . .'.³

That music is concerned with rhyme and meter is a slim basis indeed on which to build a theory of art (it is important evidence, nonetheless, as we shall see). But this should not surprise us, since Pater's real focus in *The Renaissance* is elsewhere: on the painting of Botticelli, Giorgione, Titian, and Leonardo, the sculpture of Luca della Robbia, and the poetry (not painting or sculpture) of Michelangelo. Why, then, does Pater speak of music at all? What kind of music does he have in mind? And how does his appeal to that music ground the insights of *The Renaissance* not only into Renaissance art but all art?

The present essay attempts to answer these questions, not by importing an aesthetic theory from elsewhere in order to explain what Pater never said but

might have meant about the condition of music, but by looking at what Pater both said and meant about the art that deeply engaged his critical attention, the art of the Italian (and French) Renaissance. Whereas Pater looked to the condition of music to illuminate Renaissance art, I shall look to Pater's criticism of Renaissance art, or at least some of it, to illuminate the condition of music. I shall proceed in my investigation on the assumption that the best way to understand what Pater *meant* by the condition of music is to understand what he actually *said* about the condition of art, a condition most perfectly exemplified by the painting of Giorgione and Leonardo.

In the opening pages of 'The School of Giorgione', Pater tells us that what is 'truly artistic' in art addresses itself neither to 'pure intellect' nor 'pure sense' but to the 'imaginative reason', that 'complex faculty for which every thought and feeling is twin-born with its sensible analogue or symbol'.⁴ Art—exemplary art, that is—has to do not with content or form alone, not with representational subject-matter or medium of representation, insofar as these are conceivable apart from one another, but rather with the skillful blending of content and form into a single, indissoluble whole.

If art merely addressed the intellect, if it merely conveyed a content (the words 'mere' and 'merely' occur throughout the 'Giorgione' essay—three times in the opening paragraph alone), then the particular form in which art's content was communicated would be dispensable. But this, for Pater, is most emphatically not the case. The precise way in which content is expressed or represented, its particular form of sensuous embodiment, whether in painting, sculpture, poetry or music, is both crucial and irreducible. To understand art is above all to understand the central and ineliminable role of *form* in the expression of any content whatsoever.⁵

Drawing on Lessing's discussion in the *Laocoön* of the distinct capabilities and limitations of sculpture and poetry, Pater tells us that each art 'has its own peculiar and untranslatable sensuous charm, has its own special mode of reaching the imagination, its own special responsibilities to its material'.⁶ No form of art is merely a *means*, from which it follows that each form is incapable of translation into any other. Were painting, poetry, and the like, mere means to the representation of a given subject-matter, then each could be dispensed with in favour of any other. Each would be, in Pater's words, 'as but translations into different languages of one and the same fixed quantity of imaginative thought, supplemented by certain technical qualities ...'. The truth, for Pater, is just the reverse: what addresses the intellect at the same time addresses the senses in all their concrete particularity, and form is no more detachable from content than is content detachable from form.

But if form and content are not separable, how are we to understand the 'sensuous charm' that is unique to each separate art? How can a form of sensuous embodiment even be *conceived* apart from the particular content it informs or embodies? The answer, it would seem, lies in the differing tech-

niques and media of the various arts, in the use of colour, or shape, or tones, or rhythmical words, and so on. However, Pater rejects this answer. Such things—in painting, for example, colour, and line—are for him the ‘mere communicable result of technical skill’.⁷ They are no more capable of engaging the imaginative reason than is the ‘mere poetic thought or sentiment’ that Pater instances as pure pictorial content.⁸ ‘True pictorial quality’ is won neither by giving prominence to technique nor by making technique subordinate to subject-matter. Only by linking technique and subject-matter, form and content, in a relation Pater calls ‘identification’ do we go beyond the ‘mere’ and get to the ‘truly artistic’ in art.⁹

Alongside the importance Pater places on the individuality of the various art forms, on each’s responsibility to its material, there is an even greater emphasis in the ‘Giorgione’ essay on an opposed tendency of the arts to strive after the condition of one another, a tendency referred to in German criticism as *Anders-streben* (literally: ‘other-striving’).

But although each art has thus its own specific order of impressions, and an untranslatable charm, while a just apprehension of the ultimate differences of the arts is the beginning of aesthetic criticism; yet it is noticeable that, in its special mode of handling its given material, each art may be observed to pass into the condition of some other art, by what German critics term as *Anders-streben*—a partial alienation from its own limitations, through which the arts are able, not indeed to supply the place of each other, but reciprocally to lend each other new forces.¹⁰

Architecture approaches pictorial form, or, in other instances, poetry. Sculpture aspires to colour or drama. Poetry is guided by sculpture, drama, the art of engraving. Music tends towards figure. And so on. Yet, Pater tells us, apart from the strivings of these individual arts:

All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music. For while in all other kinds of art it is possible to distinguish the matter from the form, and the understanding can always make this distinction, yet it is the constant effort of art to obliterate it. That the mere matter of a poem, for instance, its subject, namely, its given incidents or situation—that the mere matter of a picture, the actual circumstances of an event, the actual topography of a landscape—should be nothing without the form, the spirit, of the handling, that this form, this mode of handling, should become an end in itself, should penetrate every part of the matter: this is what all art constantly strives after, and achieves in different degrees.¹¹

All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music because it is the general aim of art to *obliterate* the distinction between matter and form, and only in music, or so it would appear, does there exist the possibility of perfect obliteration.

It is the art of music which most completely realizes this artistic ideal, this perfect identification of matter and form. In its consummate moments, the end is not

distinct from the means, the subject from the expression; they inhere in and completely saturate each other; and to it, therefore, to the condition of its perfect moments, all the arts may be supposed constantly to aspire¹²

We may well wonder, at this point, just which are the moments Pater has in mind. What kind of music is he thinking of? Vocal music? Instrumental music? Symphonies, chamber works, solo pieces? May we not be said to discern an intellectually detachable content in opera or in sacred music? And what about the tone poems and narrative programmes, hidden or otherwise, that interested so many nineteenth-century composers?

Given the complete absence of musical examples in *The Renaissance*, we can expect no clear answer. Yet speculation on this point is unavoidable. For it makes a difference if music's ideally consummate moments are vocal or purely instrumental, if they are part of a larger whole, a *Gesamtkunstwerk* involving drama, poetry, stage props, and the like, or are devoid of what are strictly speaking extramusical components.

There is good reason to assume, or so I shall argue, that Pater's consummate musical moments are purely instrumental, that what Pater has in mind is the so-called absolute music of the nineteenth century, exemplified by the symphonies, chamber works and sonatas of Beethoven, Schumann and Brahms. Absolute music would be ideally suited to exemplify Pater's thesis since it contains nothing extraneous to the medium of music itself, a medium consisting solely of tonally moving forms arranged melodically, harmonically and rhythmically. The form and the content of absolute music would thus appear to be identical. The assumption of absolute music is also supported by Pater's emphasis in the du Bellay essay on the *non-spoken* elements of rhythm (meter) and harmony. But mostly it is supported by the prevailing aesthetic of the nineteenth century, the aesthetic of the *absolute*, which elevated music without text, title, programme, or other extramusical component to a station far above not only all other music but all other art.¹³ Accordingly, Pater's conception of the *Anders-streben* of art as the perfect identification of matter and form would itself be a reflection of the aesthetic paradigm of absolute music.

Assuming, then, that music's ideally consummate moments consist of the greatest instrumental works or parts thereof, we arrive at an essentially *negative* interpretation of Pater's thesis. According to this interpretation, the condition of music is exemplary because music alone among the arts lacks an intellectually separable subject-matter. The condition of music is exemplary because music has no representational content. Music occupies the unique position of being free of the burden of mimesis, a burden which painting, poetry and sculpture still bear (in the 1870s, at the time Pater is writing) and against which (if Pater is right) they continually struggle.

Should we conclude from the negative interpretation of Pater's thesis that music has no content? Or should we take Pater to mean, à la Eduard Hanslick,

that music's content is its own, tonally moving forms? We cannot do either of these things without creating a problem. For, as Pater clearly states, the condition of music consists not of the obliteration (or reduction) of *matter* but of the obliteration of the *distinction* between matter and form. Music's ideally consummate moments consist of the perfect *union* of matter and form, of the harmonious blending of those elements with which the senses and the intellect operate in isolation but which address the imaginative reason as an undivided whole.

Art, then, is thus always striving to be independent of the mere intelligence, to become a matter of pure perception, to get rid of its responsibilities to its subject or material; the ideal examples of poetry and painting being those in which the constituent elements of the composition are so welded together, that the material or subject no longer strikes the intellect only; nor the form, the eye or the ear only; but form and matter, in their union or identity, present one single effect to the 'imaginative reason', that complex faculty for which every thought and feeling is twin-born with its sensible analogue or symbol.¹⁴

Just how are we to conceive this union of matter and form in the condition of music? With *what* are music's tonally moving forms being united? The negative interpretation of Pater's thesis, according to which music is exemplary because it *lacks* something the other arts *have*, leaves us at an impasse. Either the condition towards which all art constantly aspires is *not* music, since music apparently has no subject-matter, or else the condition of music is something *other* than the perfect identification of matter and form.

Obviously, in order to resolve this dilemma we must interpret Pater's thesis *positively*, in the sense of attributing to music a content as well as a form. We must take seriously Pater's statement to the effect that form, conceived in isolation or detached from content, is as artistically deficient as is content, isolated or detached from form. Since Pater tells us virtually nothing about music, however, either its content or its form, the grounds for a positive interpretation of his thesis are lacking. I propose to look at Pater's criticism of Renaissance art as a way of compensating for that lack.

II

It is, to begin with, the selection and handling of Giorgione's *subject-matter* that attracts Pater's attention. The subjects of Giorgione's paintings are (when chosen freely by the painter himself) dictated by a responsiveness to form.¹⁵ This responsiveness, Pater tells us, this 'subordination of mere subject to pictorial design, to the main purpose of a picture ... is typical of that aspiration of all the arts towards music.'¹⁶

In the art of painting, the attainment of this ideal condition [of music], this perfect interpenetration of the subject with the elements of colour and design, depends,

of course, in great measure, on dexterous choice of that subject, or phase of subject; and such choice is one of the secrets of Giorgione's school. It is the school of *genre*, and employs itself mainly with 'painted idylls', but, in the production of this pictorial poetry, exercises a wonderful tact in selecting of such matter as lends itself most readily and entirely to pictorial form, to complete expression by drawing and colour (p. 95).

The subjects Giorgione depicts seem not to comprise anything that could properly be called a *matter*. His 'idylls' are bizarre and disconnected, 'painted poems ... belong[ing] to a sort of poetry which tells itself without an articulated story'.¹⁷ In the words of Vasari, whose description of the frescoes for the Fondaco dei Tedeschi (the Venetian offices of the German merchants' association) could well be Pater's: '[Giorgione] only thought of demonstrating his technique as a painter by representing various figures according to his own fancy ... And I for my part have never been able to understand his figures nor, for all my asking, have I ever found anyone who does. In these frescoes one sees, in various attitudes, a man in one place, a women standing in another, one figure accompanied by the head of a lion, another by an angel in the guise of a cupid; and heaven knows what it all means.'¹⁸

Pater's talk of the subordination of subject-matter to painting is evident throughout the 'Giorgione' essay, as is his emphasis on the importance of the formal or pictorial elements of colour and line. Indeed, so intent is Pater on combating the aesthetic of mimesis, according to which pictorial form is subordinate to subject-matter, that his attitude towards the content of art appears at times to be completely dismissive:

... [the] earlier Venetian painters ... never seem for a moment to have been so much tempted to lose sight of the scope of their art in its strictness, or to forget that painting must be before all things decorative, a thing for the eye, a space of colour on the wall, only more dexterously blent than the marking of its precious stone or the chance interchange of sun and shade upon it.¹⁹

If one wanted to read Pater as a formalist, one would do well to stick to passages like this, in which subject-matter is seen as no more than a means to the pictorial end of decoration or design, where content is treated as a mere excuse for the development and display of form. But there is more to Pater's understanding and appreciation of Renaissance art than the 'subordination of mere subject to pictorial design'.

Giorgione's paintings may not tell an 'articulated story', they may not have a definite, intellectually detachable subject-matter; but they do have content. They have *ideal* content. In Pater's words, Giorgione's paintings are like 'ideal types of poetry', in which there is a 'suppression or vagueness of mere subject, so that the meaning reaches us through ways not distinctly traceable by the understanding ...'.²⁰ Pater calls this meaning 'ideal' because it is not—indeed,

cannot be—representationally fixed. The 'ideal' meaning of Giorgione's paintings is intimated rather than indicated, suggested rather than described. It is addressed neither to the intellect nor to sense but to the imaginative reason, that 'complex faculty for which every thought and feeling is twin-born with its sensible analogue or symbol'.²¹

The ideality of the school of Giorgione is for Pater akin to 'the highest sort of dramatic poetry':

[in] that it presents us with a kind of profoundly significant and animated instants, a mere gesture, a look, a smile, perhaps—some brief and wholly concrete moment—into which, however, all the motives, all the interests and effects of a long history, have condensed themselves, and which seem to absorb past and future in an intense consciousness of the present. Such ideal instants the school of Giorgione selects, with its admirable tact, from that feverish, tumultuously coloured world of the old citizens of Venice—exquisite pauses in time, in which, arrested thus, we seem to be spectators of all the fulness of existence, and which are like some consummate extract or quintessence of life.²²

The profoundly animated moments of Giorgione's figures—their gestures, looks and smiles—are too much, too rich, too fine, too fleeting to play the role of an intellectually detachable content. Such 'symbols' or 'sensible analogues' *undermine* the function of representation rather than *subserve* it—not, however, by eliminating all else in favour of colour and line but by *using* colour and line to point to an ideal content (the fullness of existence, the extracted quintessence of life) that literally defies representation.²³

Leonardo da Vinci, Pater tells us in another essay in *The Renaissance*, struggled with the problem of the 'transmutation of ideas into images', with the relation between 'reason and its ideas, and the senses, the desire of beauty ...'.²⁴ Leonardo struggled with sensuous representation because the scope of his ideas was too broad, because he had to contain within the narrow compass of the representational 'those divinations of a humanity too wide for it, the larger vision of the opening world, which is only not too much for the great, irregular art of Shakespeare ...'. Like Giorgione, Leonardo ruled over 'the mere subject', bending it 'dexterously to purely artistic ends'. He was 'the most profane of painters', despite his handling the most sacred of subjects (*The Last Supper*, *The Virgin and Saint Anne*), because these subjects provided only a 'pretext for a kind of work which carried one altogether beyond the range of ... conventional associations'.²⁵ Leonardo's subjects, sacred and secular alike, were used 'not for their own sake, or as mere subjects for pictorial realisation, but as a cryptic language for fancies all his own'.²⁶

The following, widely quoted description of the *Mona Lisa* is the most remarkable passage in all of Pater's criticism.²⁷

The presence that rose thus so strangely beside the waters, is expressive of what in the ways of a thousand years men had come to desire. Hers is the head upon

which all 'the ends of the world are come',²⁸ and the eyelids are a little weary. It is a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions. Set it for a moment beside one of those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of antiquity, and how would they be troubled by this beauty, into which the soul with all its maladies has passed! All the thoughts and experiences of the world have etched and moulded there, in that which they have of power to refine and make expressive the outward form, the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the mysticism of the middle age with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias. She is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave; and has been a diver in deep seas, and keeps their fallen day about her; and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants; and, as Leda, was the mother of Helen of Troy, and, as Saint Anne, the mother of Mary; and all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the delicacy with which it has moulded the changing lineaments, and tinged the eyelids and the hands. The fancy of a perpetual life, sweeping together ten thousand experiences, is an old one; and modern philosophy has conceived the idea of humanity as wrought upon by, and summing up in itself, all modes of thought and life. Certainly lady Lisa might stand as the embodiment of the old fancy, the symbol of the modern idea.²⁹

Leonardo's painting symbolizes the idea of humanity by its expression of not one experience but ten thousand, of all the thoughts and experiences of the world, of perpetual life—not as dead, abstract, detachable idea, but as sum total of a humanity lived, felt, sensuously embodied.³⁰ Lady Lisa's long and complex past is to her as the pure sound of music, just as it is to us the changing lines and colours of her body, the sensuous surface of a beauty wrought out from within upon her flesh, a beauty expressed but by no means exhausted by that flesh, extending far beyond the sensuous surface of Leonardo's painting to encompass strange thoughts, fantastic reveries and exquisite passions. To gaze on *La Gioconda* is, for Pater, at least, to see etched and moulded in a mere outward form—a thing for the eye, a space of colour on the wall—all in the way of human desire that was, is, and ever will be.

III

Having before us some choice examples of Pater's criticism, let us again inquire into the condition of music. What is this great *Anders-streben* of art? What are music's ideally consummate moments such that Giorgione, Leonardo, and the other artists that occupy Pater's attention in *The Renaissance*, strive to attain them?

We have seen that the paintings of Giorgione and Leonardo have not only representational content but ideal content as well. In the representational sense, the *Mona Lisa* and Giorgione's painted idylls have as their subject-matter a real woman, *La Gioconda*, and a group of strangely situated figures, respectively. In the ideal sense, each has as its subject-matter a humanity embodied

in fleeting and fantastical images, a wholly imaginary humanity that defies all attempt at definition or conceptual closure.

What is to prevent us, then, from attributing to music—to great music, that is, to its consummate moments—what Pater attributes to the painting of Giorgione and Leonardo? May we not speak of an ideal content in music? Beethoven certainly did. He called that content a ‘poetic idea’. And while Beethoven was perhaps the first and surely the greatest composer to speak of absolute music this way, he was by no means the only one. The notion of a poetic idea, distinct from and independent of representational content, and having more to do with *feeling* than with looks, sounds or other sensible properties, was altogether typical of the romantic idealism of the nineteenth century.³¹

In attributing an ideal content to music, we have provided a *positive* interpretation of the thesis of the identification of matter and form, and so resolved Pater’s dilemma. In music as well as in the other arts there is a possible *union* of matter and form.

Both the negative and the positive interpretation of Pater’s thesis are required to explain the condition of music. The negative interpretation is required in order to safeguard the autonomy of art, an autonomy signified by music’s freedom from representational constraint. The positive interpretation is required in order to block the move that divorces autonomous art from life, the move that collapses autonomy into formalism.

Pater’s criticism shows that the ‘identification’ of matter and form in the condition of music is to be taken not *logically*, as the substitution of one term for another, but *aesthetically*. The ideal matter of music or any other art is revealed not *as* form but *through* form, or more precisely, through the *imaginative perception* of form. When Pater says that the end of music is not distinct from the means, he means not that end and means are identical but that music’s end is perceived through musical means alone.³² Music is the condition towards which all the other arts constantly aspire because music’s ideal content is perceived *entirely* and *only* through its own, tonally moving forms. Painting, sculpture, and poetry have still to contend with representational subject-matter, but music’s communication of an ideal content requires nothing of the sort. The condition to which all art aspires is that of *aesthetic self-sufficiency*.

The question of whether music speaks *through* its form or merely *of* its form, whether music’s tonally moving forms point to an extramusical meaning or merely signify themselves, has long been debated in the history of musical aesthetics. In that debate, Pater has been enlisted on the side of formalism, on the side of those who see music’s consummate moments not as the aesthetic sufficiency of form to content but as the logical reduction of content to form—on the side, that is, of those who would deny abstract art any share of meaning that is not itself abstract.³³ I have argued, to the contrary, that the truly artistic—that which for Pater gives art or any other object aesthetic value—

concerns not only form but *ideal matter*, a matter neither reducible to form nor detachable from it but communicable *through* form, and, in music's exemplary condition, communicable through form alone.

IV

I end by offering a brief assessment of Pater's place in and importance for the history of philosophical aesthetics, neither of which has so far been sufficiently appreciated. In doing so I go back to Kant, whose *Critique of Judgement* provides the impetus for the formalist turn in aesthetics of the past two hundred years.

The imaginative thinking characteristic of aesthetic experience is for Kant and Pater exactly similar. Kant's aesthetic ideas, like Pater's ideal content, contain a wealth of imaginative material (partial and undeveloped representations [*Teilvorstellungen*]) too vast and too fragmentary to constitute a determinate object of the understanding (Pater's intellectually detachable subject-matter).³⁴ But whereas Pater focuses on the *content* of aesthetic experience, Kant focuses on its *form*. It is the general activity of the imagination, rather than its specific content on a given occasion of reflection, that interests Kant, the free play of the imagination as such, rather than the actual material with which imagination operates. Aesthetic judgement, for Kant, consists in a universally communicable feeling of delight both caused by and signifying the general agreement or formal accord of the imagination and the understanding. Thus the validity of aesthetic judgement concerns only the *form* of aesthetic experience and not its *content*—a form communicable only as feeling, moreover, and not in words.

Pater's criticism, his careful attention to and articulation of art's matter in all its particularity, stands in sharp contrast to Kant's focus on the generality of aesthetic experience. And it makes us wonder if Kant has not purchased that generality at too great a price. In the history of philosophical aesthetics, Pater is the first fully to articulate—against the explicit backdrop of Kant, whom Pater not only read but reflected on extensively, and in the spirit of Hegel, whose project Pater explicitly endorses and takes one step further—a full fledged phenomenology of the aesthetic.³⁵ Pater's phenomenological aesthetics, with its emphasis on the 'facts' of imaginative perception, serves importantly to remind us that aesthetic judgement concerns not just 'significant form' but a content whose perceptual particularity is both more communicable and less universal than Kant and the many who have followed him would have liked to think. It reminds us that art theory must account for critical practice, a practice as diverse and as vital to human interests as art itself.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, edited and with an introduction by Adam Phillips (Oxford and New York: Oxford U.P., 1986), p. 86. All references to Pater, unless otherwise indicated, are to this edition of *The Renaissance*. Apart from the statement just quoted, Pater is seldom discussed today among philosophers of art. An important exception is Richard Wollheim: see 'Walter Pater as Critic of the Arts', in *On Art and the Mind* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard U.P., 1974), pp. 155-176.
- ² Pater, op. cit., p. 107.
- ³ Pater, op. cit., p. 108.
- ⁴ Pater, op. cit., p. 88. The term 'imaginative reason' is Matthew Arnold's: 'The poetry of later paganism lived by the sense and understanding; the poetry of medieval Christianity lived by the heart and imagination. But the main element of modern spirit's life is neither the senses and understanding, nor the heart and imagination, it is the imaginative reason.' From Arnold's 1864 essay, 'Pagan and Medieval Religious Sentiment', quoted in Walter Pater, op. cit., p. 166. See Harold Bloom's introduction in *Selected Writings of Walter Pater*, edited and with an introduction and notes by Harold Bloom (New York: Columbia U.P., 1974), for commentary on Pater's terminological relation to Arnold.
- ⁵ Meyer Schapiro, the art critic and historian, clarifies the point here made by distinguishing content from subject-matter: 'In a representation every shape and color is a constituting element of the content and not just a reinforcement. A picture would be a different image of its object and would have another meaning if its forms were changed in the slightest degree. So two portraits of the same person, done with different forms, are different in content, though identical in subject. It is the specific representation together with all the ideas and feelings properly evoked by it that makes the content.' From 'On Perfection, Coherence, and Unity of Form and Content', in *Selected Papers*, Vol. 4 (New York: George Braziller), pp. 41-42. Nevertheless, Schapiro and Pater differ in that Schapiro regards the unity of form and content as characteristic of all art, and in a sense, then, as trivial, whereas for Pater the unity of form and content is a standard of artistic perfection (of that in art which is 'truly artistic'). I shall continue to use 'content' and 'subject-matter' interchangeably at this point in the discussion, however, in order not to pre-empt Pater's own way of making the distinction.
- ⁶ Pater, op. cit., p. 83.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Pater, op. cit., p. 88.
- ¹⁰ Pater, op. cit., p. 85.
- ¹¹ Pater, op. cit., p. 86.
- ¹² Pater, op. cit., p. 88.
- ¹³ For discussion of the evolution of this aesthetic, see Carl Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, trans. Roger Lustig (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989); John Neubauer, *The Emancipation of Music from Language* (New Haven and London: Yale U.P., 1986); and Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).
- ¹⁴ Pater, op. cit., p. 88.
- ¹⁵ I should note that Pater mistakenly attributes at least two of Titian's paintings, the *Fête Champêtre* and the *Concert*, to Giorgione.
- ¹⁶ Pater, op. cit., p. 90.
- ¹⁷ Pater, op. cit., p. 95.
- ¹⁸ Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, trans. George Bull (Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1965) pp. 274-275.
- ¹⁹ Pater, op. cit., p. 89.
- ²⁰ Pater, op. cit., p. 87.
- ²¹ The attribution of an ideal content to works of art is wholly consistent with Pater's writing, not only in *The Renaissance* but in the late and important essay, 'Style'.
If music be the idea of all art whatever, precisely because in music it is impossible to distinguish the form from the

substance or matter, the subject from the expression, then, literature, by finding its specific excellence in the absolute correspondence of the term to its import, will be but fulfilling the condition of all artistic quality in things everywhere, of all good art.

Good art, but not necessarily great art, the distinction between great art and good art depending immediately, as regards literature at all events, not on its form, but on the matter . . . It is on the quality of the matter it informs or controls, its compass, its variety, its alliance to great ends, or the depth of the note of revolt, or the largeness of hope in it, that greatness of literary art depends, as the *Divine Comedy*, *Paradise Lost*, *Les Misérables*, *The English Bible*, are great art (in Uglow, pp. 88–89).

Critics have been puzzled and distressed by the ending of 'Style'. Bloom sees the emphasis on matter as a 'repeal', motivated by guilt, of Pater's earlier position in *The Renaissance* (Bloom, loc. cit. xxv). René Wellek regards it as a complete 'revocation' of the 'aestheticism' of Pater's earlier writings, as a 'recantation at the expense of any unified, coherent view of art', a relinquishing of 'insight into the unity of matter and form'. In René Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism, 1750–1950*, Vol. 4 (New Haven and London: Yale U.P., 1965), p. 395. But see Jennifer Uglow's Introduction to *Walter Pater: Essays on Literature and Art* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd, 1973), xvi; and F. C. McGrath, *The Sensible Spirit: Walter Pater and the Modernist Paradigm* (Tampa: University of Florida Press, 1986), for readings that make the ending of 'Style' consistent with Pater's earlier view—especially McGrath, for whom the ending is not only consistent with *The Renaissance* but 'the climax and clearest exposition' of Pater's theory of art (p. 201). 'Style' is reprinted in numerous editions of Pater's work, including Uglow's.

²² Pater, op. cit., pp. 95–96.

²³ The following passage, one of the most striking in the 'Giorgione' essay, shows how

easy it is to mistake Pater for a formalist. 'In its primary aspect, a great picture has no more definite message for us than an accidental play of sunlight and shadow for a few moments on the wall or floor: is itself in truth, a space of such fallen light, caught as the colours are in an Eastern carpet, but refined upon, and dealt with more subtly and exquisitely than by nature itself.' The key words here are 'primary aspect' and 'definite'. Light, shadow and colour, as opposed to a well-defined subject-matter, are what constitute painting in its primary aspect. It is clear from the very next sentence, however, that there is more to painting than its primary aspect. 'And thus primary and essential condition fulfilled, we may trace the coming of poetry into painting, by fine gradations upwards; from Japanese fan-painting . . . [to] Titian . . .' (p. 85).

²⁴ Pater, op. cit., p. 72.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Pater, op. cit., p. 78.

²⁷ Solomon Fishman calls it the most remarkable piece of art criticism in the English language. See *The Interpretation of Art* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), p. 52; also Bloom, loc. cit., xviii.

²⁸ The phrase is from *I, Corinthians*, 10:11, as noted by the editor of *The Renaissance*.

²⁹ Pater, op. cit., pp. 78–80.

³⁰ Pater's indebtedness to Hegel is evident in this passage, as it is elsewhere in *The Renaissance*, see, in particular, the essay on Winckelmann.

³¹ For an interesting discussion of the extramusical in Beethoven's instrumental music, the string quartets in particular, see Leon Botstein, 'The Patrons and Publics of the Quartets. Music, Culture, and Society in Beethoven's Vienna', in Robert Winter and Robert Martin (eds.), *The Beethoven Quartet Companion* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 77–109.

³² Pater's identity thesis, as I am here interpreting it, anticipates R. G. Collingwood's discussion in *The Principles of Art*.

- ³³ That the condition of music, although non-representational, is not itself purely musical is a point that was clearly grasped by Wellek, loc. cit., pp. 391-392.
- ³⁴ Aesthetic ideas strive towards the boundless intelligibility of pure reason while remaining within the intuitive bounds of sense, thus functioning in Kant's philosophical system as an all-important bridge between the noumenal and the phenomenal. See Section 49 of the 'Analytic of the Sublime' in *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. J. C. Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), pp. 175-182.
- ³⁵ For Pater's criticism of Kant, see the early essay 'Coleridge's Writings', in Uglow, op. cit., pp. 1-30; and for his indebtedness to Hegel, see the essay 'Winckelmann' in *The Renaissance*, pp. 114-149.

CLIVE BELL AND G. E. MOORE: THE GOOD OF ART

Jeffrey T. Dean

It is the philosopher's privilege to call upon the artist to show that what he is about is either good in itself or a means to good. It is the artist's duty to reply: 'Art is good because it exalts to a state of ecstasy better far than anything a benumbed moralist can even guess at; so shut up.'

Clive Bell, *Art*¹

IN HIS *Principia Ethica*, G. E. Moore sets out what he takes to be the three primary subjects for the proper study of ethics.² The first is to define 'good'; the second is to determine what things, or what kinds of things, are good; and the third is to determine a basis for judgements about what states of affairs ought to obtain, based on the first two. In his book, *Art*, Clive Bell focuses on the second of these subjects, accepting Moore's definition of 'good' without comment and largely ignoring the question of moral obligation. Bell's conception of the relationship between art and ethics is generally attributed to an immersion in the views offered by Moore in *Principia Ethica*, and Bell himself acknowledges this debt. At the same time, the passage from *Art* cited above is not at all in keeping with the spirit of Moore's ethical theory (though it is certainly vintage Bell). The main purpose of this paper is to examine the extent to which Bell was justified in basing his rather extravagant claims about the moral significance of art on the foundation of Moore's ethics.

There is certainly much to be said for the putative correlation of Bell's views with Moore's. Bell, like the rest of Bloomsbury, owed much to the spirit of Moore's methodology,³ and they approach their respective subjects in a strikingly similar manner. In the first pages of *Art*, Bell claims that 'All sensitive people agree that there is a peculiar emotion provoked by works of art', and that

... if we can discover some quality common and peculiar to all the objects that provoke it, we shall have solved what I take to be the central problem of aesthetics ... For either all works of visual art have some common quality, or when we speak of 'works of art' we gibber.⁴

In similar fashion, Moore, at the outset of *Principia Ethica*, asks, 'What is it that is ... common and peculiar [to ethical statements]?'⁵ Both Bell and Moore

go on to claim that they have, through careful distinction and analysis, come upon those things unique to their respective fields of inquiry. For Bell, that feature common to all works of art is significant form; for Moore, the '*only* simple object of thought which is peculiar to Ethics' is what is good.⁶

In claiming to determine the qualities 'common and peculiar' to their fields of inquiry through the consideration of experience, Moore and Bell share in an essentialist, empiricist tradition. However, while certain methodological similarities are apparent, it remains to be seen whether Bell was correct in maintaining that his own views on the relationship between art and morality can be supported by Moore's ethical theory in the way he thought they could.⁷

1. BELL'S AESTHETIC THEORY

Much of Bell's aesthetic theory rests upon what he calls the 'aesthetic hypothesis'. As mentioned, Bell believes that there is a certain kind of emotion 'provoked' by works of art.⁸ And while not all works of art will provoke the same emotion, all emotions provoked by art (proper to the art itself) are recognizable as being *of a certain kind*, which Bell calls 'aesthetic emotion'.⁹ This kind of emotion, notes Bell, is peculiar to our experience of art; nothing else brings it about. Also, as previously noted, Bell holds that there must be one feature common to all works of visual art; otherwise, to speak of a class of objects as *art* objects would be to 'gibber'. And it must be the case, imagines Bell, that it is just *this* feature of the art work which causes aesthetic response. That feature common to all objects which gives rise to aesthetic emotion is significant form, namely that combination of lines, colours, forms, and relations of forms that is 'aesthetically moving'.¹⁰

There are a number of problems with Bell's formulation of the aesthetic hypothesis, several of which damage the plausibility of his aesthetic theory, but only two of which are relevant to Bell's additional claims about ethics: (i) the claim that *only* artworks produce aesthetic emotion, a claim that Bell himself contradicts; and (ii) the additional claim that the provocation of aesthetic emotion is necessarily what is best (i.e. what produces the most good) about art.

With regard to (i), Bell's inductive attempt to isolate the causal nexus of aesthetic emotion and significant form falters when he also notes that aesthetic emotion is felt by some persons (often artists) in the contemplation of nature, by mathematicians in contemplating abstract mathematical formulae, and by the 'rapt philosopher'.¹¹ If not only art, but nature, pure mathematics, and philosophy can give rise to aesthetic emotion, how are we to determine that it is *significant form* that causes this emotion in the case of art? And if things other than works of art sometimes provoke aesthetic emotion, how can we use these particular emotive responses to identify what is and is not art?

For current purposes, the particulars of these questions do not matter as much as the fact that Bell allows that there are things other than art which can provoke aesthetic emotion, or a near analogue. This causes problems not only for the purposes of art identification, but for Bell's moral claims as well. For if what is important about art is that it causes aesthetic emotion, and if it is also the case that things other than art cause aesthetic emotion, then what is *important* about art is not *peculiar* to art, and this, as will become clear, undermines Bell's thesis that art is of the highest moral significance.¹²

The second problem (ii) arises because, to the degree that he emphasizes the importance of significant form, Bell disclaims any artistic value for the other elements of visual art (e.g. representation). This becomes crucial in Bell's discussion of the relationship between art and morality. Since visual art, properly construed, just *is* significant form, and since significant form is what induces aesthetic emotion (which, we will see, is said to be intrinsically good as a certain kind of mental state), Bell proposes that in claiming that X is art, one is claiming *ipso facto* that X is of the greatest moral merit. Any other features of X, whatever they may be, or whatever effects they produce, are morally negligible in comparison with significant form and its effects.

This remarkable claim rests on Bell's supposition that aesthetic emotion is one of the very *best* mental states a person can enjoy.¹³ His claim is not only that aesthetic emotion, and thus art (as a means to aesthetic emotion), is *good*, but that it is the *greatest good*, such that few or no other goods are even comparable. This implies that even if there are other intrinsic goods (i.e. other good mental states), aesthetic emotion ranks at the top on an ordinal scale, and so takes precedence. And art, as the sole means to aesthetic emotion, thereby takes precedence over all other things which are good as means.¹⁴ What is more, Bell thinks that any ill effects connected with a given artwork are negligible, given that the artwork produces aesthetic emotion, which he takes to be a good so great it overwhelms any evils which might be associated with the art in question.¹⁵

Ultimately, this position runs afoul of Moore's conception of intrinsically good things as complex, organic wholes. This problem will be addressed after a brief sketch of the Moorean ethical apparatus relevant to Bell's claims for art and ethics.

II. MOORE'S THEORY OF 'GOOD'

For Moore, the definition of 'good' is the central question of ethics.¹⁶ This stands in sharp contrast to other traditional approaches to ethics construed as codifications of conduct, or theories about how one should live one's life. These latter concerns, for Moore, must be addressed subsequent to the issue of what is good. Of course, Moore is not addressing the issue of what *the* Good is, but rather what *good* is. As it turns out, *good* is described variously

as a simple, indefinable, irreducible, non-attributive, non-natural property. The greater part of ethics before Moore necessarily failed, in Moore's eyes, by not treating the analysis of 'good' as fundamental. And those who did address the issue failed because they committed the 'naturalistic fallacy'.¹⁷

Whether or not others misconstrued what was central to ethics, it is certain that Moore, in one way or another, was concerned to give an account of 'good', and that he saw this project as antecedent to any discussion of moral obligation: 'It is, in fact, obvious that in order to decide correctly at what state of things we ought to aim, we must not only consider what results it is possible for us to obtain, but also which, among equally possible results, will have the greatest value'.¹⁸

This leads naturally to the question, what things have value, and to what degree? In answer to this, Moore writes,

In order to arrive at a correct decision on ... this question, it is necessary to consider what things are such that, if they existed *by themselves*, in absolute isolation, we should yet judge their existence to be good; and, in order to decide upon the relative *degrees* of value of different things, we must similarly consider what comparative value seems to attach to the isolated existence of each.¹⁹

For Moore, 'this is, in fact, the only method that can be safely used, when we wish to discover what degree of value a thing has in itself'.²⁰ This position is motivated by Moore's foundationalism, which leads him to assume that there must be some ultimate, non-relative good thing or state of affairs which all things or states of affairs that are good as a means are good as a means *to*. The isolation of an intrinsic good is supposed to indicate the ultimate end of particular actions.

Moore is impelled by (what he takes to be) the fact that all actions which aim at what is good must aim at some ultimate end. Of course, one could argue that it is equally plausible to think that the world is made up of various kinds of things or states of affairs, some of which are good as means to others, all of which are more or less interdependent, and none of which are fundamental. (On this view of the world, Bell's thesis about the inviolable moral status of art as a means to [one of] the best end[s] would founder on open questions regarding what art is good *for*; see below.) Nonetheless, it is important to see that Moore is using a predicative (rather than attributive) sense of 'good' in the statement 'X is good', and that it denotes some state of affairs which has the simple, indefinable property (among other properties) 'good', where 'good' is not good for or in relation to anything, but good in itself. At this point, one might suppose, as Baldwin suggests, that '[d]etached as it would have to be from all ordinary judgements of the value of states of affairs, and only problematically connected with their other properties, the hypothesis that the possession by states of affairs of this property is the ground

of all ethical judgements could only invite indifference to ethical judgements'.²¹

In fact, Bell supposes quite the contrary. Bell accepts Moore's hypothesis about what is good, focusing on the intrinsic value of certain mental states, and uses it as a means to elevate art to a realm beyond moral condemnation. Since most issues pertaining to the moral evaluation of art relate to actions or states of affairs, the determination of whether Moore's theory allows this use will require a brief analysis of his conception of duty, or the proper sense of 'ought'.

For Moore, the structure of moral imperatives can be broken down into two basic elements: an ethical judgement (as to what is good), and an empirical causal judgement (as to what will bring about some good as an effect). Thus 'right' 'does and can mean nothing but "cause of a good result", and is thus identical with "useful"; whence it follows that the end always justifies the means ...'.²² Thus duty, or what one ought to do, is 'defined as that action, which will cause more good to exist in the Universe than any possible alternative'.²³ From this it follows that no moral law is self-evident (unlike intrinsic goods, which *must* be self-evident); every possible action must be analyzed in terms of its possible consequences before any judgement about one's duty can be made. Determining one's duty is an entirely empirical matter.

However, the causal correlation between actions and their effects, especially considered over time, are enormously complex. In fact, it can *never* be determined with certainty what actions will produce the most overall good, since the indeterminate future effects of each possible action must be taken into account. The result is that '[t]he utmost, then, that Practical Ethics can hope to discover is which, among a few alternatives possible under certain circumstances, will, on the whole, produce the best result', with even this being problematic, and applicable only to the immediate future.²⁴ This result has particular implications for Bell's claims regarding the moral inviolability of art.

III. ART AND ETHICS

Having examined the pertinent elements of Bell's theory of art and Moore's theory of ethics, we are in a position to determine whether Bell's radical conclusions concerning their merger follow from the Moorean premises Bell takes as his own. Bell's claim is that since the only things good in themselves are mental states, and that since there 'is no state of mind more excellent or more intense than the state of aesthetic contemplation', and because art is perhaps the most direct and potent means to a good state of mind, we can justify art ethically.²⁵ To do so, we must merely inquire, 'Is this a means to good states of mind?'²⁶

First of all, it is clear that Bell takes Moore's method of isolation out of its foundation-seeking, definitional context, and presents it instead as a simple

'litmus test' for intrinsic goodness. While Moore's account of what one ought to do is based directly on his account of what is good, the issue is complex: although Moore argues that what is good has logical priority over what we ought to do, he does not want to claim (nor does it follow) that every opportunity to bring some intrinsically good state of affairs into existence, no matter how great or small, serves as a moral imperative.

Thus, while he is careful to note that art is good as a means, and not good in itself,²⁷ Bell draws from this a conclusion not open to him. He claims that since certain mental states are good, and since aesthetic emotion is one of the best mental states, then art, which produces aesthetic emotion in a potent and direct manner, is such that '... we need not trouble ourselves about any other of its possible consequences'.²⁸

But surely, from the fact that *X* is intrinsically good, and that *Y* is a means to *X*, it does not follow that *Y* is therefore to be judged *only* in terms of *X*. For, as Bell implies in the above statement, there may be other consequences of *Y*. What, one may ask, is to prevent these other effects from having moral relevance? What is to prevent these effects from having, all things considered, *greater* significance than the effect of aesthetic emotion? The answer from Moore would be, in effect, 'Nothing'. Moore writes,

It is, in fact, evident that, however valuable an action may be in itself, yet, owing to its existence, the sum of good in the Universe may conceivably be made less than if some other action, less valuable in itself, had been performed. But to say that this is the case is to say that it would have been better that the action should not have been done. . . .²⁹

In reply, Bell might remind us that art is not valuable in itself, but only as a means to a good state of mind, and thus not subject to the same conditions as ends. But this would not be an adequate answer to the problem posed in the passage above, since in substituting 'state of mind' for 'action', we are left with the same possibility: namely, that some other state of mind (*M*₂), less valuable in itself than the state of mind in question (*M*₁), would have contributed more to the overall good in the universe. In this case, the state of mind *M*₁ should not have been brought about, thus stripping the means to *M*₁ (a given artwork, say) of its value as a means to that end.

This is clarified by Moore's idea of organic wholes. According to Moore, there are intrinsically good things, intrinsically bad things, and those things he calls 'indifferent', meaning neither good nor bad; things belonging to any one of these classes may also belong to some whole, which is made up of other things belonging to one or more of the three classes, and which itself (the whole) may have some degree of intrinsic value.³⁰ The important thing to notice is that, as Moore says, 'the value of such a whole bears no regular proportion to the sum of the value of its parts'.³¹ That is, if good thing *X*, with a goodness of 10 on some cardinal scale, were added to good thing *Y*,

with a goodness of 20 on the same scale, there is no guarantee that the overall goodness of $X + Y = 30$; the same holds for the sum of other things, good, bad, or indifferent.³²

Moore himself provides an illustration which sheds light directly on the content of Bells' claims. He writes,

It seems to be true that to be conscious of a beautiful object is a thing of great intrinsic value; whereas the same object, if no one be conscious of it, has certainly comparatively little value . . . But the consciousness of a beautiful object is certainly a whole of some sort in which we can distinguish as parts the object on the one hand and the being conscious on the other. Since . . . mere consciousness does not always confer great value upon the whole of which it forms a part . . . we cannot attribute the great superiority of the consciousness of a beautiful thing over the beautiful thing itself to the mere addition of the value of consciousness to that of the beautiful thing.³³

Now, Bell sometimes phrases things as if he considered aesthetic experience to be an organic whole, and we could perhaps substitute Bell's 'aesthetic contemplation' (aesthetic emotion plus the object of that emotion) for Moore's 'consciousness of beauty'. But most of the time, Bell places the full weight of intrinsic value on aesthetic emotion alone, which, taken by itself, is not an organic whole.³⁴ Artworks themselves are given the status of *means* to an intrinsically valuable end (namely, aesthetic emotion), but are not treated by Bell as part of an organic whole. This is an important difference on Moore's account, since parts of an organic whole are *logically* necessary conditions for the existence of that whole, whereas the means to some good are merely *causally* necessary, contingent on the 'laws of nature' of our (or some given) world.³⁵ For Moore, the causal relationship between some X that is (putatively) a means to some good Y must be confirmed via empirical investigation, thus undermining the grounds for Bell's sweeping claim that '[t]o pronounce anything a work of art is . . . to make a momentous moral judgement. It is to credit an object with being so direct and powerful a means of good that we need not trouble ourselves about any other of its possible consequences'.³⁶ That is, since the contemplation of art (as construed by Bell) necessarily places one in a context consisting (at least in part) of causal relationships, there can be no *a priori* judgements concerning the moral status of a given artwork.³⁷

Still, one is tempted to argue that, given Moore's methodology, it is not individual works of art that should be subject to moral evaluation, but rather *all art*, taken as an organic whole. In this regard, the appropriate question is not, 'Is this particular *piece* of art good (as a means)?' but 'Is *art* good as a necessary part of a particular intrinsically valuable organic whole, namely, the practice of aesthetic contemplation?' In fact, this seems to be the kind of point Bell wants to articulate when he claims that the moralist should '... make ... judgement[s] about art as a whole', but 'hold his tongue' with respect to particular judgements between works of art *as art*.³⁸ If the decision is made that art in general is a necessary part

of what is good as a whole, then art is necessary to what is good, and the only question that remains is what is to count as art.

However, on the basis of the arguments he gives, this move is not open to Bell. For, as previously discussed in relation to his aesthetic hypothesis, art (or, more specifically, significant form) is *not* a necessary condition for the experience of aesthetic emotion; there are *other* possible causes of aesthetic emotion, including mathematical formulae, philosophical arguments, nature, and sometimes perhaps even household furniture. This fact renders a reconstruction of Bell's theory in terms of organic wholes untenable, and returns art to the status of a possible means—one of several—to a (simple) good end: aesthetic emotion. And if art must be cast in the role of a means to some end, rather than as a part of an organic whole, its value is subject to verification via empirical investigation on a case-by-case basis, as mentioned above.

Nonetheless, there is something to be said for the notion of evaluating art, relative to its moral status, as a *corpus*, and someone sympathetic to Bell's approach might take recourse in the following kind of Moorean argument:

(i) The contemplation of art (significant form), and the concomitant experience of aesthetic emotion, is an intrinsically valuable organic whole (premise).

(ii) The contemplation of art produces more good than bad in the universe (premise).

(iii) We have a duty to bring about those states of affairs which produce more good than bad in the universe (premise).

(iv) We therefore have a duty to bring about those states of affairs which allow for or encourage the contemplation of art (from (i)–(iii)).

(v) Artworks are a (logically) necessary part of the contemplation of art (from (i), given the definition of organic wholes).

(vi) Therefore, we have a duty to bring about the existence of art (from (iv)–(v)).

While this argument is loose, it would serve Bell's general purposes, and matches well enough Moore's positions on duty and what is good. And again, as Bell is fond of reminding us, the determination of what counts as art should be left to art theorists, and lies beyond the proper scope of moralists.

Because Moore and Bell had significantly different ideas about aesthetic experience, and because Bell did not make an effort to fully embrace (or understand) Moore's ethical theory, Bell's own attempt to justify the moral sanctity of art on Moorean grounds falls short. Nonetheless, there may be more to Bell's exhortations about the inviolability of art than at first seems plausible. If we take Moore's views on intrinsic good, organic wholes and duty seriously, and if we judge that art, on the whole, results in more good than bad, there may be reason to suppose that particular artworks should *not* fall under the moralist's critical eye. It would then indeed be true that '[t]o pronounce anything a work of art is ... to make a momentous moral judgement', it having already been determined that *art is good*.³⁹ Then the only

decision still to be made concerns the question, 'What is art?', and that is best left to artists, critics, and art theorists, not moralists.

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NOTE

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- ¹ Clive Bell, *Art* (New York: Capricorn, 1958), p. 79.
 - ² G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (London: Cambridge U.P., 1959).
 - ³ For a detailed and interesting discussion of the influence Moore had on Bloomsbury, see Tom Regan, *Bloomsbury's Prophet* (Philadelphia: Temple U.P., 1986). Also relevant are some comments by John Maynard Keynes from 'My Early Beliefs' in *Two Memoirs* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1949), p. 82.
 - ⁴ Bell, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
 - ⁵ Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
 - ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.
 - ⁷ Moore and Bell also share some common ground in relation to what might be called 'Beauty Theories' of art in the tradition of Hutcheson and Kant. For a discussion of Bell's relation to Beauty Theorists, and of his aesthetic hypothesis generally, see Noël Carroll, 'Clive Bell's Aesthetic Hypothesis', in George Dickie, Richard Sclafani and Ronald Roblin (eds), *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1989), pp. 84–95. Monroe Beardsley, in his *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1958), p. 545, takes Moore's position in *Principia Ethica* as 'the most promising departure for a modern version of the Beauty Theory', though of course Moore offers no independent theory of art himself.
 - ⁸ Bell usually says that works of art 'provoke' aesthetic emotion. I will assume that Bell means that the observation of visual art *causes* aesthetic emotion, without stipulating the precise structure of the causal relationship.
 - ⁹ Bell, *op. cit.*, p. 17. Bell writes, 'All sensitive people agree that there is a peculiar emotion provoked by works of art. I do not mean, of course, that all works provoke the same emotion. On the contrary, every work produces a different emotion. But all these emotions are recognisably the same in kind ...' It is unclear just what Bell means here. It is trivially true that different works produce different token emotions (as do different viewings of the same work), and this is surely not what Bell has in mind. But since Bell also claims that all works of art provoke the same kind of emotion, it is then difficult to see what he could be after—given his simple causal theory of emotion—when he says that works provoke different emotions of the same kind.
- A contemporary theorist might claim that the object of an emotion (including the aesthetic emotion) is a partial criterion for the character of that emotion, such that the emotions caused by different works, while of the same kind (since caused by the

significant form of an artwork), can be distinguished on the basis of their object (the specific features of the particular artwork in question). Of course, such a view was not available to Bell, given the time he was writing. (The subject of this paragraph was brought to my attention, in a somewhat different context, by a referee for this journal.)

Still, I am uncertain about the extent to which Bell could accept such an analysis of aesthetic emotion, even if it were available. Since Bell takes the representational features of a work of art to be aesthetically irrelevant, and since he does not specify an internal structure of significant form, it is not clear what criteria would be used to specify different (types of?) aesthetic emotions. That is, since the proper object of aesthetic emotion is significant form, which is something that all works of art share in common, more needs to be said about how to distinguish different instances of significant form (as well as their concomitant emotions)

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 18. Bell's explanation is notoriously circular

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 20, 27, and 28, respectively. In addition to his 'aesthetic hypothesis', Bell has a 'metaphysical hypothesis', according to which what is significant about significant form may be that it conveys (i) 'reality itself' (whatever that means), and/or (ii) the emotional state of the artist which inspired him or her to produce the artwork. One is tempted to ask, especially in the case of (i), how significant form would then be 'non-representative'. would it not represent reality?

¹² Strictly speaking, this simply undermines the claim that art is the only thing that is of the highest moral significance (as noted by a referee for this journal). But, while Bell sometimes allows—for the sake of argument—that there may be other things of equal moral significance, he usually indicates his belief that art is the 'most direct and potent' (*Art*, p. 83) means to the very best state of mind (see *Art*, pp. 79, 83, and 84). This claim is discussed below. And even if we are charitable, and allow that Bell intended the weaker, more plausible claim

that art is one of several morally significant phenomena, other serious difficulties for his position persist.

¹³ Ibid., p. 83: '... there is no state of mind more excellent or more intense than the state of aesthetic contemplation'.

¹⁴ Of course, Bell's theory is here subject to the problem that art is *not* the only means to aesthetic emotion (or its near equivalent), as argued earlier

¹⁵ Bell, op. cit., p. 84

¹⁶ Moore, op. cit., p. 5

¹⁷ See Thomas Baldwin, G. E. Moore (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 70. Baldwin sets out three accounts of the naturalistic fallacy, as expressed variously by Moore. They are, (i) to deny that goodness is undefinable; (ii) to assert, concerning something other than goodness, that it is goodness; and (iii) to deny that goodness is non-natural. All are unsatisfactory in one way or another, and Moore himself abandoned talk of the naturalistic fallacy after *Principia Ethica*

¹⁸ Moore, op. cit., pp. 186–187.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 186–187

²⁰ Ibid., p. 91

²¹ Baldwin, op. cit., p. 76

²² Moore, op. cit., p. 147

²³ Ibid., p. 148

²⁴ Ibid., p. 151.

²⁵ Bell, op. cit., p. 83. It is worth mentioning that Bell gives no argument for the idea that the state of mind associated with aesthetic contemplation is bettered by no other, that he leaves 'excellent' entirely undefined, and that he gives no justification for holding excellence and intensity as the appropriate criteria for selection of the best states of mind

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Bell mentions in a footnote that he approves of Moore's decision to count only certain states of mind as intrinsically good. Moore earlier held that inanimate beauty was also intrinsically good

²⁸ Bell, op. cit., p. 84

²⁹ Moore, op. cit., p. 147–148

³⁰ For Moore, mental states are organic wholes

³¹ Moore, op. cit., p. 27

³² One wonders how Moore could ever make this determination, given his scepticism con-

cerning the (epistemological) indeterminacy of causal relationships over time. For his claim is not simply that the proportional values of wholes and parts are epistemologically uncertain, but that there is no regular proportion. How can he know this?

³³ Moore, op. cit., p. 28.

³⁴ Bell seems to treat aesthetic emotion as if it were a simple mental state, caused by, but distinct from, the perception of significant form.

³⁵ Moore, op. cit., p. 29

³⁶ Bell, op. cit., p. 84.

³⁷ It might be of interest to some that Thomas Leddy, in his article, 'Moore and Schusterman on Organic Wholes' in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol 49, No. 1, Winter 1991, pp. 63-73, also puts Moore's position on organic wholes to use (though he ultimately finds it unsatisfactory) in his analysis of a number of issues relevant to aesthetics (viz emergent properties, radical organicism, and relativized essences in relation to painting)

³⁸ Bell, op. cit., p. 84.

³⁹ As a means, that is.

THE PARADOX OF SUSPENSE

Robert J. Yanal

NARRATIVES, FICTIONAL and factual, commonly raise in their audience suspense. A narrative lays out over time (not all at once) a sequence of events; and because the events of the narrative are not completely told all at once, questions arise for the audience which will be answered only later in the narrative's telling. Will the transfigured panther-woman (Simone Simon) pounce on her rival (Jane Randolph) as she walks home alone at night, hearing strange noises around her (Val Lewton's *Cat People*, 1942)? Will Sam and Annie (Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan) ever make their date at the top of the Empire State Building (Nora Ephron's *Sleepless in Seattle*, 1993)? And the most classic question of all, 'Who dunnit?', or as it appears in its post-modern form, 'Who will do it?' 'This is the story of a murder. It hasn't happened yet. But it will,' Martin Amis writes at the beginning of *London Fields*. 'I know the murderer, I know the murderee,' and we are soon told that the murderee is to be Nicola Six.¹ But who will kill her? And why?

To raise suspense, a narrative not only withholds information (which it is, by the fact of its temporality, forced to do); it implies several possible alternative outcomes, only one which can be eventually realized later in the narrative, though which will be realized will at points in the narrative be uncertain (to the audience). This uncertainty as to the narrative's outcome would seem to be a necessary condition for suspense, for it would seem that a person cannot be in suspense regarding an outcome he already knows. There are undoubtedly other necessary conditions for suspense. An audience should care about (or 'identify with') the characters of a narrative. It may be impossible to be held in suspense over the outcome of a situation that does not interest you. Noël Carroll claims that suspense occurs only when the morally best outcome is portrayed by the narrative as improbable.² It would be morally best (we think) if Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks could manage to keep their New Year's Eve date atop the Empire State Building, but as Ephron's narrative makes that unlikely, we are in suspense. Carroll's claim implies that if there is no morally desirable outcome in the offing (the hero will either be boiled alive or thrown to the alligators, no other outcome being implied) or if all outcomes are morally equal (the hero will either be rescued by his best friend or by her servant, no other outcome being implied), then we will not be in suspense. Perhaps he is correct, though given the complexity of human response, it is difficult to say for sure.

The problem I will raise here revolves around the apparent necessity for suspense of uncertainty regarding a narrative's outcome. For we might be audience to the same narrative sequence more than once. Books are sometimes read and re-read, movies viewed and re-viewed, histories told and re-told. Do we feel suspense on such repetitions?

In Alfred Hitchcock's wartime film *Notorious* (1944), Alicia Huberman (Ingrid Bergman), daughter of a man convicted of spying for the Nazis, is herself recruited to spy for the American government when it is discovered that she does not share her father's politics. Alicia has (as part of her 'secret mission') married Alexander Sebastian (Claude Rains), a former friend of her father's, who runs a chemical plant and a ring of Nazi spies in Rio de Janeiro. Suspicion begins to centre on Sebastian's wine cellar which is thought to harbour something other than wine, something very important to the Nazi cause (it turns out to be uranium).³ Now the American spy Devlin (Cary Grant) must gain access to the wine cellar. But how will Alicia engineer this without arousing suspicion? She invites Devlin to a large reception given by herself and her husband. In one sweeping take, the camera begins at the top of a stairway overlooking a crowd of Nazi party guests, moves down the stairs, through the assembled guests, and into the main ballroom, where it zeros in on Sebastian's key-ring, Bergman removes a key, secretes it in her palm, and the camera follows her as she greets invited guest Devlin with a handshake.

The two eventually make their way into the wine cellar where they discover a dark metallic ore stored in wine bottles, while above them a reception of Nazi agents goes on. It is entirely clear that their lives are in danger if they are discovered, and they almost are. Sebastian comes down the stairs, too late for them to hide; so Devlin grabs Alicia and kisses her thus masking a spy mission as a pass at the host's wife, a ruse which Sebastian seems to accept (though he will later develop his own suspicions about Alicia).

First-time viewers of *Notorious* do not know whether Alicia and Devlin will be found out in the wine cellar; and because of their uncertainty, first-time viewers experience intense suspense as Alicia and Devlin rummage through the wine bottles. Will Alicia be missed upstairs? Will anyone come down to the wine cellar? Suspense dissipates when Alicia and Devlin get away with this particular escapade, though Hitchcock's film begins almost immediately to rebuild suspense by introducing other dangers for Alicia.

Repeaters (those who have seen the film at least once and are into their second or third or ... viewing), know in advance that Alicia and Devlin are not found out in the wine cellar, or so we might assume. We would predict that repeaters will not experience suspense during the wine cellar scene, for they are certain as to its outcome. Yet if repeaters *still* experience suspense during the wine cellar sequence, we encounter a paradox.

Do repeaters still experience suspense? Kendall Walton, among others, thinks that they do. Indeed he thinks repeaters experience suspense over and over again with each retelling of the same narrative. 'Will Jack of Jack and

the Beanstalk' succeed in ripping off the Giant without being caught?' Walton asks.

Although Lauren knows that fictionally Jack will escape from the Giant, as she listens to still another rereading of 'Jack and the Beanstalk', it is fictional that she does not know this—until the reading of the passage describing his escape. Fictionally she is genuinely worried about his fate and attentively follows the events as they unfold. It is fictional in her game during a given reading or telling of the story that she learns for the first time about Jack and the Giant. It is the fact that fictionally she is uncertain about the outcome, not actual uncertainty, which is responsible for the excitement and suspense of her experience. One cannot learn, each time one hears the story, what fictionally Jack and the Giant do, unless one always forgets in between. But one can participate each time in a game, and that is what appreciators do.⁴

Walton is not alone on this. Another writer on the topic, Richard Gerrig, describes what is supposed to be a typical reader's response to Richard Rhodes' history, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*. The reader, if he is typical, knows that the atomic bomb will eventually be made, though Rhodes' book 'so painstakingly lays out obstacles to the development of the bomb that the book is incessantly suspenseful.'⁵

A paradox is a set of statements, each of which is apparently true (the statement might seem intuitively correct, or it might be verified by experience or entailed by an apparently good argument). Yet these apparent truths taken together prove to be jointly inconsistent. Since contradictions cannot be true, at least one statement must be false. The paradox of suspense in brief is this:

- (i) Repeaters experience suspense regarding a certain narrative's outcome.
- (ii) Repeaters are certain of what that outcome is.
- (iii) Suspense requires uncertainty.

A solution to a paradox tells us which apparent truth is in actuality a falsehood. I will look at two solutions, one by Walton, the other by Gerrig, each of which accepts (i) and (iii) as truths, and accordingly denies or substantially modifies (ii). Both Walton and Gerrig attempt to provide a simulacrum of uncertainty that operates within our re-experience of narrative. I will then examine a claim by Harold Skulsky which in effect denies (iii). I am going to argue against all of these solutions.

KENDALL WALTON'S VIEW

Kendall Walton proposes a solution to the paradox, a solution which applies his theory of make-believe (or imaginative exercise or pretence) to suspense. Walton thinks that in general our response to fictions requires make-belief. In a famous example, Charles, who is watching a horror film about a horrible green slime, does not believe, though he makes-believe, that the green slime is bearing down on him. Charles experiences most of the physiological symptoms of fear: he grips his chair, his heart beats faster, he gives out a shriek.

Yet Charles, on Walton's view, is not truly afraid. He is what Walton calls 'quasi afraid', principally because Charles' emotional state is generated by an imaginative exercise, not by a belief. It is, Walton will sometimes say, fictionally true though factually false that Charles is afraid.⁶

Repeaters engage in imaginative exercises. The repeater who is certain that Alicia and Devlin get away with their wine cellar escapade, on second (and third and ...) viewing engages, according to Walton, in an imaginative exercise in which he makes-believe that he is *uncertain*. The repeater must imagine himself as not knowing the outcome. Just as Charles can imagine himself into a state of quasi-fear, the repeater can imagine himself into quasi-suspense. It is fictionally true though factually false that the repeater does not know what comes next in the narrative. ' "What readers know" is ambiguous,' Walton claims, 'between what they "know" qua participants in their games of make-believe and what they know qua observers of a fictional world ... between what it is fictional that they know and what they know to be fictional.'⁷ This suggests a biplanal view of cognitive mental activity with regard to appreciating fiction:

Fictional plane: Uncertainty whether the spies are caught *produces* (quasi) suspense.

Factual plane: Certainly that the spies are not caught *precludes* (actual) suspense.

Can a person imagine himself to be uncertain that *p* when he in fact is certain that *p*? Now I do not mean to ask whether a person can, as we might say, pretend uncertainty. Of course we can do that. Suppose I am invited to lunch by President Clinton, who launches into an anecdote which, it turns out, I have heard many times before. I know all its twists and turns. Still, during the story I sit in rapt attention, giving out little calculated gasps of excitement; and at its conclusion I say, 'What a story, Mr President. You had me on the edge of my seat!' Now I was no more uncertain about the outcome of the story than I was in suspense. My response is entirely false, feigned, mimed (though, one hopes, forgivable).

But this is not what Walton means. He means that just as a person can imagine, say, being stuck in a narrow passage in a cave and thereby experience cold sweats and shivers, he can imagine being uncertain of something of which he is certain.⁸ In either case there is a fact that (so to speak) contradicts imagination; yet imagination persists, even producing emotional and physiological effects. For Walton there is no difference between these two exercises in imagination:

(a) Imagining being stuck in a cave (thereby producing panic, tightness of breath, etc.) while being certain that one is not stuck in a cave.

(b) Imagining being uncertain whether Alicia and Devlin escape the Brazilian Nazis (which produces feelings of suspense) while being certain that they do escape.

Walton thinks that (a) and (b) are really the same sort of thing; and argues that since it is apparent that (a) can easily occur, it is not much of a stretch to accept (b) as well.

But are (a) and (b) the same sort of thing? We have an idea what it is to imagine being stuck in a cave: we conjure up mental pictures of a narrow passage, of ourselves wriggling into it, of finally being unable to move forward or backwards. If our images are sufficiently vivid, we may well experience tinges of panic, shortness of breath, cold sweats, and the like.

It is difficult, however, to know what it is like to engage in (b). Suppose I live in an area shaken frequently by earthquakes, mostly minor ones. Still, I become frightened whenever there is an earthquake, and develop a technique designed to calm myself. I imagine myself bobbing up and down in warm, blue Caribbean waters (I form the appropriate mental images). Usually my technique works: I experience relaxed, calm feelings.

My calming exercise enables me to focus my attention on one thing (my mental picture show) and away from another (the shaking ground). Perhaps I even forget, briefly, that there is an earthquake going on. But my exercise in imagination does not render me *uncertain* that there is an earthquake—it does not, that is, take me from a state wherein I know that there is an earthquake happening to one in which I no longer know it.

It is not that one could not be brought by imagination from certainty to uncertainty. It is rather that were such a thing to happen, we should treat it as a case in which imagination has become something else: repression, denial, even momentary psychosis (if there is such a thing). The person who begins to imagine himself stuck in a cave, but ends up being uncertain that he is still in his living room has lost his grip on reality. Whatever else is going on, he is no longer *imagining* being stuck in a cave, since one imagines that *p* only if one does not accept *p* as true. If lying in bed I hear a thump downstairs and take it to be true (on that basis) that there is a burglar in the house, I will properly be said to have inductively inferred the presence of a burglar. If it turns out that I am wrong (there is no burglar), I might be accused of making a weak induction (drawing a conclusion from insufficient evidence), though I may be vulgarly, though improperly, accused of imagining a burglar.

RICHARD GERRIG'S VIEW

Another biplanal view is propounded by Richard Gerrig, who refers to the paradox of suspense as 'anomalous suspense'—anomalous because the repeater seems to lack access to information he clearly possesses. Why? Gerrig claims that 'because time is unidirectional ... every experience is unique', and consequently 'in our everyday lives ... we have incorporated an *expectation of uniqueness* into the cognitive processes that guide our experience of the world.'

When we read a text for the second time, we are violating the general constraint on non-repetition. Anomalous suspense and anomalous replotting arise because

the system acts in ignorance of these violations. We can make an analogy to perceptual illusions. Under special circumstances, our perceptual system can be made to fail. The failures require no special explanation. Anomalous suspense and anomalous replotting can be thought of as cognitive illusions ..

Even when certain knowledge of (often undesirable) outcomes intrudes on the experience of a text, the reader continues to consider all outcomes as possible.⁹

As I understand it, this view says that due to interacting with the ordinary factual world, we end up with the expectation that every event will be 'unique', an expectation so hard to shake that it continues to operate even when we re-encounter narratives whose outcomes we might know quite well. The expectation of uniqueness cannot be turned off (so to speak), and continues to operate. It is as if ordinary life delivered to us constant experiences of yellowness, though every once in a while we encountered situations we knew were not yellow, though they looked yellow anyway. Anomalous suspense is an illusion in the sense that our expectation of uniqueness only makes us *think* we do not quite know what is coming next when we in fact do. Gerrig's, in fact, is another biplanal view:

The factual plane (cognition in general): We expect every event to be 'unique'.

The fictional plane (re-encountering fictions): We know what the next event is.

The expectation of uniqueness is in effect a stand-in for uncertainty. Thus Gerrig's view is quite parallel to Walton's in that both have us operating with certainty and uncertainty as we re-encounter fiction.

But uncertainty has switched places in Gerrig's theory. What I have called the fictional plane with respect to Walton's theory is responsible for producing (quasi) suspense. Gerrig has to generate suspense from the factual plane, i.e. from cognition in general. Suspense (it would seem) can only come from what we *do not* know, and this is provided in his theory by the expectation of uniqueness. On the fictional plane we know full well what is coming next; on the factual plane we do not know what is coming next. This implies (among other things) that in daily life we should *always* be in suspense regarding what is coming next; and this is (fortunately) false.

Gerrig arrives at this false view via an ambiguity in the notion of uniqueness. There is, of course, a sense in which every event is unique. I may have turned on my computer a hundred times, and in one way exactly the same thing happens each time though each on-turning is 'unique' in that it is numerically distinct from each other on-turning. Each perceptually indistinguishable ping-pong ball in a bag of one hundred is in this sense unique, i.e. numerically distinct from each other ball (though we usually cannot tell one from the other). But that two events (or two physical objects) are unique in this sense—mere numerical distinctness—will not entail that the events (or

objects) do not share all (or nearly all) *other* physical properties. The metaphysics of identity aside, when I turn on my computer I do *not* expect a unique event to occur. I expect the same thing to happen as happened ninety-nine times before: that is, I expect a token on-turning to differ from the earlier on-turnings only numerically. And if there is any general expectation with which we approach the world, it is the expectation of *sameness* (which is why Hume wanted to think of induction as a *habit*). Surprise is an infrequent not a constant feature of cognition. Thus Gerrig has no uncertainty from daily life to inject into our experience of repeated narratives, hence no solution to the paradox.

DOES SUSPENSE REQUIRE UNCERTAINTY?

One commentator on the paradox, Harold Skulsky has suggested that suspense does not require uncertainty, thereby solving the paradox by denying (iii).

The mistake . . . is to assume any essential connection between suspense and uncertainty. Where uncertainty happens to be a factor in enjoyment, the enjoyment cannot in any case be salvaged by pretence; witness the request of the theatre management not to give away the plot of a murder mystery. Where repetition is tolerated, the tolerance is due not to feigned uncertainty but to unfeigned sympathy for the hero ...¹⁰

Skulsky, though, slides from explaining suspense to explaining enjoyment. Sympathy for the hero may explain why we 'tolerate' repeating the fiction, though Skulsky does not make clear what connection sympathy has with suspense. Still, Skulsky raises what I take to be a central issue: does feeling suspense require uncertainty? Skulsky thinks not, though he has no argument for it.

I think I can argue that suspense *does* require uncertainty. Feeling suspense is an uncomfortable emotion. When we are in a state of suspense—over the outcome of the surgery, over whether the bombs will fall again tonight, over the results of the test, and so on—we are in a state of discomfort which may range from slight to acute. In such cases, it is clearly the uncertainty itself that contributes the pain to the emotion, a fact expressed by the sayings of the anxious: 'If only I knew', 'The waiting is the worst', 'I wish they'd get it over with already' and so on. Once the uncertainty is lifted, the discomfort goes with it—or at least the discomfort attached to the uncertainty. When the surgeon announces that the operation is a success and the patient is doing fine, we respond with enormous relief. The suspense and its associated discomfort is dissipated through the simple removal of uncertainty. Of course, if the news is bad (the patient died), we may respond with other emotions (grief or anger), though our suspense over the outcome of the surgery will be no more. The news may introduce further suspense (the patient is in a precarious state, he may or may not recover), but here we have the reintroduction of uncertainty, though over a somewhat different outcome.

I think that this parallels our experience of narrative. Repeaters may feel strongly about the fate of Alicia and Devlin as they prowls about Sebastian's wine cellar literally underneath a crowd of Nazis. Repeaters may feel concern, anxiety, or other responses to the plight of characters they like and care about. But first-time viewers have an added discomfort. They do not know whether Alicia and Devlin escape. It is this discomfort that is missing in repeaters, and it is why I hold that repeaters do not actually experience suspense.

THE PARADOX SOLVED

If Walton and Gerrig are unsuccessful in providing a simulacrum to suspense, then (ii) stands: Repeaters *are* certain of the outcome of the narrative. And I have just argued that (iii) is true: suspense truly requires uncertainty. Therefore the troublesome proposition must be (i).

In Andrew Bergman's 1990 film, *The Freshman*, Clark Kellogg (Matthew Broderick) enrolls in New York University's film school, where his professor (Paul Benedict) discusses, in minute detail, Francis Ford Coppola's 1972 *The Godfather*. (One of the jokes in *The Freshman* comes when Kellogg is offered a job by one Carmine Sabatini, played by Marlon Brando reprising his *Godfather* role.) While clips from *The Godfather* are being screened for his class, the professor watches from the back of the room, mouthing the lines along with the screen actors. Could the professor possibly be in suspense over whether the Hollywood mogul Jack Woltz (John Marley) will eventually give the movie role to Johnny Fontane (Al Martino)? Of course not. The professor knows the film inside out. He knows that the Corleones will make Woltz an offer he cannot refuse, an offer he finds in his silk-sheeted, blood-soaked bed.

The professor of *The Freshman* is a true repeater. A true repeater is not merely someone who has already experienced a narrative. A true repeater *remembers* the sequence of events of that narrative. (Paul Benedict's professor character is even what we might call a super repeater: he knows not just what happens next, but the lines, word for word.) True repeaters do not experience suspense for they are not uncertain over what comes next.

This is not to say that repeaters experience nothing at all, however. Indeed, the first-timer's experience is likely to be different from the repeater's. Walton and Gerrig miss differences between encountering and re-encountering a narrative. They think each can be suspenseful. But I think our encounters and re-encounters with narratives are often emotionally different.

Just about everyone who has seen Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) knows—knows and remembers—that Marion Crane (Janet Leigh) is murdered in the shower, in a masterful sequence, possibly the most famous ever put on celluloid. As Marion undresses and steps into the shower, the repeater feels something that I would like to call fear of the known. The repeater is not in suspense about Marion's fate, for he knows exactly what that fate is. The repeater is strongly apprehensive on Marion's behalf precisely because he

knows that she is about to be brutally stabbed to death. But apprehensiveness is not suspense, though the two often occur together (as when we are apprehensive because we are in suspense).

In contrast, the first-time viewer of *Psycho* will be in slight suspense about whether Marion will get away with the money she has stolen. The first-time viewer is not concerned about her *physical* safety. All the first-time viewer knows is that Marion has stolen a large sum of money from her boss's client, driven off, and checked into the old Bates Motel. She has been given a room next to the motel office, in which she has a chat with the odd, shy young proprietor, Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins). Returning to her room, Marion begins to undress, while next door Norman Bates moves a picture to peek at her through a hole in the wall. The first-time viewer will sense that Marion is not in an especially wholesome situation (and, of course, she is on the lam). The first-time viewer has no fear of the known, has no strong apprehension about Marion's fate, because he does not know of the murder in the shower. Hitchcock does not signal that murder, say, by making Norman Bates more threatening. Marion's murder is, if anything, not even on the cards given that the film is not half over and she is its main character.

It is not only with suspense stories proper that our reactions change upon reviewing. A first-time viewer of *Casablanca* will be in suspense during the final scene at the airport. Will Ilsa Lund (Ingrid Bergman) leave with her husband, Victor Laszlo (Paul Henreid), or will she stay with her true love, Rick (Humphrey Bogart)? A repeater who has seen the film many times knows that Rick tells Ilsa to go with her husband (they have important anti-fascist work to do). Our repeater knows Ilsa will board that aeroplane, leaving Rick and Luis (Claude Rains), the police prefect, to start their 'beautiful friendship'. But the repeater will still have feelings: he will feel, perhaps, a little bit in love with Bergman, will admire Bogart for his ironic altruism, will be humoured by Claude Rains' order (having just shot Major Strasser) to 'round up the usual suspects'. The repeater will revel in the romantic fatalism of the events of *Casablanca*, something not felt by the first-time viewer who is still in suspense over what comes next.

Casablanca and other works can deliver experiences other than suspense. That is why we repeat them. Not all works have that much more to offer. Consider works which deliver to the reader or viewer suspense and only suspense, for example, Robert Ludlum's *Aquitane Progression*, Tom Clancy's *Hunt for Red October*, Frederick Forsyth's *Day of the Jackal*. I do not say such works are not enjoyable; they are, though precisely because and only because they are so suspenseful. Such works do little more than set in motion a narrative sequence which involves its characters in precarious situations. The reader/viewer sufficiently likes the hero(ine) or loathes the villain to wonder what comes next. But when suspense is the main aesthetic thrill, there is little to

recommend repetition. And while the novels of Ludlum, Clancy, and Forsyth are read (in prodigious quantities), they are, I suspect, rarely re-read; and this because a suspense novel cannot deliver suspense to anyone who knows its outcome. (By the way, I do not intend to demean the experience of suspense, though there is something limiting about a *work* that delivers only suspense. By saying that something cannot be re-experienced, I do not mean to imply that it was not worth experiencing in the first place. I see no reason to rank suspense as inferior to other emotions we might experience through fiction: pity, fear, hope, sadness, and the rest. Suspense might even be *more* precious than these because it can be had only once!)

Still, what of Lauren in Walton's example who, fictionally anyway, is filled with 'excitement and suspense' about Jack's fate, though she factually knows that Jack escapes from the giant. Suppose Lauren grows up and claims that despite the fact that she has seen *Casablanca* about a hundred times (and has no memory lapse on the matter), she is *still* in suspense over whether Ilsa will stay with Rick or go with her husband. Do we now have a clear counter-example to my view: a case of someone who is certain of the outcome of a narrative yet who nonetheless feels suspense?

Now, not everything that can be described is thereby possible, though it can be made to seem so. Suppose I describe a case in which a person wanders about disembodied. Now the fact that such a case can be rendered with plausibility—it is, in fact, the core plot of films from *Topper* to *Ghost*—does not mean that it is thereby a *possible* case, and that mind-body materialism is thereby disproved. Disembodied persons may well be *impossibilities*, though convincingly, sometimes charmingly, portrayed in narrative. Now Walton's example does little more than describe with disarming simplicity a case of someone who is certain of the outcome of a narrative, yet who is said to feel suspense. I maintain that we need more than a description here; we need an *argument* that Lauren's mental state is possible.

Walton might maintain that there are arguments to this effect all around us. Look at the way children want a story re-told. Look at the adults who view *Casablanca* over and over. Well, yes, but what does this show? It does not, at least not obviously so, show that such people are both certain of the outcome and filled with suspense. It might show something rather different, namely that stories and movies have more to offer than simple suspense at their outcomes. Lauren might enjoy hearing the tale because it is familiar or because daddy is paying such nice attention to her or because she loves the part where the beans grow so high. Walton himself provides a variety of responses Lauren might have: admiration for Jack's exploits, the 'thrill of adventure', and so on. Lauren might well get excited as the giant approaches, though this is insufficient to establish that she is experiencing *suspense*, i.e. an emotional reaction to some uncertainty as to the outcome.

REPETITION AND THE APPEARANCE OF SUSPENSE

A paradox intrigues because it presents *apparently true* (yet jointly inconsistent) propositions. Without apparent truth, we have only contradiction, hardly an intriguing state of affairs. So, why did we think a falsehood was truth to begin with? A solution to the paradox is not complete without an explanation of the apparent truth of its troublesome proposition.

There are, I think, two reasons why it sometimes *seems* that repeaters experience suspense. One is that repeaters may confuse suspense with something else. Another is that not all repeaters are true repeaters, that is, repeaters often forget in between readings or viewings. Let me elaborate on forgetting.

I have said that (i) is the troublesome proposition in the paradox. But (i) is not simply false. It is ambiguous between holding that *repeaters* experience suspense and *true repeaters* experience suspense about a narrative's outcome. I have so far argued that (i) is false in the latter sense: true repeaters, i.e. repeaters who know and correctly remember a narrative's outcome, cannot be in suspense over that outcome. But not all repeaters are true repeaters, and this is part of the explanation of the apparent truth of (i).

The fact is that repeaters forget many—really most—of the details, and even some of the plot structure, of a narrative. I open a book I am writing on the paradox of emotion and fiction by describing the crop duster sequence in *North By Northwest*. I first relied on memory. It had been several years since I saw the film, and in my first recollection Roger Thornhill, Cary Grant's character, escaped the plane by running out of the corn field, flagging down a truck, and going off with the driver. I acquired a video tape of the film, and discovered that Thornhill runs out of the corn field, and tries to flag down a gasoline truck which very nearly runs him over. The crop duster pursues him to the truck, and crashes into it, with both truck and plane bursting into flame. I rewrote my description again from memory, then checked it again against the video, and *still* was off by several details. This time I took notes while I watched it. I think I finally have it right, but remember that I was recalling a fairly well-known cinematic incident which is, at least until you get to the details, not terribly complex. I *knew* that Cary Grant makes it out alive, but forgot just how.

What of the many works of fiction that are not so well-known, that a reader has read or seen in a movie theatre once ten years ago? Not only will this reader or viewer not remember details, but there will be large gaps of plot missing from his memory. (Who has not had the experience of reading or viewing something for some time before realizing he has read or seen it before?) It in fact takes a *good* deal of familiarization before one can recite the narrative sequence bit-for-bit. And any bits missing from the reader's or viewer's memory are uncertainties capable of generating suspense. I cannot be in suspense about whether Roger Thornhill gets away (I know he does and

cannot therefore be in suspense over *that*); but perhaps I can be in a bit of suspense about exactly how he does elude the crop duster (if my memory does not deliver all the details).

I have said earlier that some response to narrative is sometimes misidentified as suspense. When the repeater for the umpteenth time watches the scene at the airport in *Casablanca*, he may enjoy the wonderful script ('What about us?' Bergman asks. 'We'll always have Paris,' Bogart tells her) and performances (he should count among his blessings the fact that Ronald Reagan who very nearly played Rick was in the end passed over); the viewer may empathize with Bergman's broken heart or be amused by Bogart's sudden attack of patriotism; he may feel a wave of nostalgia for 1940s-style romance; he may hate what war does to people; he may feel almost *anything* but he will not feel suspense, unless he really forgets just what Bergman ends up doing. However, there is a way in which the repeater's experience picks up a certain quality perhaps easily misidentified as suspense, namely anticipation. We look forward to seeing this wonderful scene again. But this, of course, is not the same as feeling suspense, i.e. an emotion grounded in uncertainty.

We can easily go wrong with a *prima facie* answer to the question, What emotion am I feeling? The *prima facie* answer goes first for the gross contours of the 'raw feel' of the emotion. An emotion may feel pleasurable or discomfiting to us, and its hedonistic quality can deliver a *prima facie* identification. But then we may say we feel joy when we really feel hope, or that we feel fear when we really feel mistrust. Too, we may initially seize on the forward- or backward-looking contours of an emotion. But now anticipation may appear as suspense, or grief as regret. On second thought, the *prima facie* answer may be corrected: we think the situation through a bit more, we identify the intentional object of the emotion, and so on. We often 'reason out' what emotion we are properly feeling.

It is, I suggest, the *prima facie* misidentification of emotions that creates the appearance of suspense in true repeaters. What other conclusion can we reach if we accept propositions (ii) and (iii)? When Janet Leigh's Marion enters that shower in *Psycho*, the true repeater might report that he is in suspense over what happens, though we must take this as a *prima facie* misidentification of something else: his apprehension for Marion's fate. When the true repeater once again views *Sleepless in Seattle*, he might say he is in suspense over whether Annie Reed (Meg Ryan) will keep her rendezvous at the top of the Empire State Building with Sam Baldwin (Tom Hanks), though the truth is that our true repeater is in a state of anticipation: he looks forward to the romantic satisfaction afforded by a scene he enjoys.

If not suspense, then what survives repetition? And why? The simple answer is: We can re-experience any emotion that does not require uncertainty. Walton quotes Leonard Bernstein, 'I've seen [*West Side Story*] about five thousand times maybe. And I always end up in tears'.¹¹ Bernstein's reaction (it

might be better to say his *stamina*) is certainly true of some who re-experience narrative: some are always, over and over again, delighted to see Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks finally connect, anxious over Janet Leigh's shower, appalled at Desdemona's murder. We can infer, at least, that such emotions do not require uncertainty, and accordingly can go in the full knowledge of what comes next. But why do emotions occur and reoccur? Why do we seek them out, again and again? These are good questions, and perhaps some day I will have good answers for them.¹²

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- ² 'Specifically, suspense in fiction generally results when the possible outcomes of the situation set down by the story are such that the outcome that is morally correct, in terms of the values inherent in the fiction, is the less likely outcome'; Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror* (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 137–138.
- ³ The idea of uranium, by the way, was fairly prescient on Hitchcock's part—remember that *Notorious* was shot before the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.
- ⁴ Kendall Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe* (Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 1990), p. 261.
- ⁵ Richard J. Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds. On the Psychological Activities of Reading* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1993), p. 159.
- ⁶ Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, pp. 196 ff.
- ⁷ Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, p. 270.
- ⁸ This example (of imagining being stuck in a cave) is developed by Walton in his comments on a version of this paper read to the American Philosophical Association (Chicago, April 1995).
- ⁹ Richard J. Gerrig, 'Reexperiencing Fiction and Non-Fiction', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 47, 1989, p. 279. 'Anomalous replotting', which Gerrig pairs with anomalous suspense, occurs when we re-encounter a well-known narrative—Gerrig's example is the explosion of the space shuttle *Challenger*—and find ourselves 'watching the first few seconds of lift-off and crying out mentally, 'Make it!'—though we know it will not. This is not quite paradox, for it shows only that we sometimes wish for an outcome different than the one that came about. See Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds*, p. 177.
- ¹⁰ Harold Skulsky, 'On Being Moved by Fiction', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 39, 1980, p. 13.
- ¹¹ Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, p. 259.
- ¹² Kendall Walton's comments on a version of this paper read at a session of the 1995 Chicago American Philosophical Association forced some revisions. Richard Gerrig, who chaired that session, made me aware of his book and the broader psychological context of his theory. I thank both of them, though I should note that my paper persuaded neither away from his view.

I would also like to acknowledge the reference books that jogged my memory more than once: *Leonard Maltin's Movie Encyclopedia* (New York: Dutton, 1994); *Roger Ebert's Video Companion* (Kansas City: Andrews, McMeel & Parket, 1993); James Monaco, *The Encyclopedia of Film* (New York: Perigee Books, 1991); and *The Motion Picture Guide* (Chicago: Cinebooks, 1985).

WALTON ON IMAGINATION, BELIEF AND FICTION

Christopher New

AT THE beginning of his challenging book, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, Kendall Walton describes a case of daydreaming:

Fred find himself, in an idle moment, alone with his thoughts. Feeling unsuccessful and unappreciated, he embarks on a daydream in which he is rich and famous. He calls up images of applauding constituents, visiting dignitaries, a huge mansion, doting women, and fancy cars. But, alas, reality eventually reasserts itself, and Fred gets back to selling shoes.¹

Two paragraphs later, Walton goes on:

Before proceeding, we should note the independence of imagining from truth and belief. Much of what Fred imagines is false, and is known by him to be false. But he imagines also that his name is Fred, that he prefers warm climates, that France is in Europe, and much else that he knows to be true. To say that someone imagines such and such is sometimes to *imply* or *suggest* that it is not true or that the imaginer disbelieves it. Nevertheless, imagining something is entirely compatible with knowing it to be true.

As the words 'entirely compatible' and, indeed, all his other remarks indicate, Walton's claim is not merely that it is possible for someone to imagine what he believes, but also that one who does so is in no way behaving inconsistently. Walton does not argue the point, however, perhaps considering that, once stated, it will be obvious. As an explication of the ordinary meaning of 'imagine', however, so far from being obvious, the claim is mistaken. While it is possible, in the relevant sense of 'imagine', to imagine what we know or believe to be true, we cannot do so without having inconsistent beliefs. (Assuming that knowing entails believing, I shall economize henceforth by speaking only of *believing*. Clearly, on that assumption, if Fred cannot imagine what he *believes* to be true without having inconsistent beliefs, neither can he imagine what he *knows* to be so.)

Notice first that the sense of 'imagine' involved in Walton's example is that of 'make-believe'. Fred's daydream consists of his *making-believe* that he is rich and famous, etc. As this follows from Walton's own theory, and I believe he

has established its truth, I shall not attempt to defend this point here, but rather refer any sceptical readers to Walton's book. (We may also think of making-believe here as non-deceptively *pretending to oneself*.) Now Walton is clearly right in thinking Fred may imagine what is *true*; he may imagine that women dote on him, for example, and it may be true that, unbeknownst to him, they do. And Walton is right, too, (although this may have misled him) in thinking that Fred can imagine that women dote on him without *disbelieving* that they do—that is, without believing that they do not. He may have no opinion on the matter, whilst perhaps hoping that in fact they do; and his hope may well lead him into a daydream in which he makes-believe that they actually do dote on him. Fred can do these things without in any way holding inconsistent beliefs. But if he simultaneously imagines (in the 'make-believe' sense) that women dote on him and *believes* that they do, he will have inconsistent beliefs. The reason for this is that a condition of any kind of pretending that *p*, hence also of making-believe (or non-deceptively pretending to oneself) that *p*, is that one does not believe that *p*—just as a condition of intending to do something is that one does not believe one has already done it. Consequently someone who makes-believe that *p* and also believes that *p* has inconsistent beliefs, just as does someone who intends to pay the bill and also believes he has already paid it. It is possible, though surely rare, for people to harbour two such different attitudes simultaneously, but it is not possible for them to do so without being inconsistent.

Why do I say that a condition of pretending that *p* is that one does not believe that *p*? This is a question of linguistic usage which must ultimately depend on the intuitions of speakers of the language. But the first-person test is a pretty reliable indicator here. My claim is, then, that competent speakers of English would judge 'I am pretending (or making-believe or non-deceptively pretending to myself) that I am famous, and I also believe that I am famous' as absurd as they would judge 'I intend to pay the bill and I also believe that I have already paid the bill' absurd. They would find them absurd for the same reason that they would find the sentence 'I assert that it is raining, and I don't believe it is raining' absurd: in each case the speaker denies in the second part of his assertion that a condition for the truth of the first part—that he is pretending (making-believe), intends or asserts—has been fulfilled. True, it may be possible for someone both to assert that *p* and also not believe that *p*. But then he will believe that *p* and not believe that *p*; that is, he will have inconsistent beliefs. Equally, it may be possible for someone to pretend or make-believe that *p* and also believe that *p*, or to intend to do something and also believe he has already done it. But then, too, he will believe that *p* and not believe that *p*, that is, he will have inconsistent beliefs. This seems to be the only plausible explanation of the fact that all these first-person utterances are absurd.

Someone may object here, however, that there are cases in which they are not absurd, cases in which one may quite consistently pretend that *p* whilst believing that *p*. Suppose, for instance, that Fred represents himself in a game of charades, or plays himself in the autobiographical docudrama, *The Life Of Fred*. Since acting can be called a form of pretending, does he not consistently pretend to be Fred whilst believing he is Fred? Not if we consider these cases more scrupulously. In the case of charades, he normally performs actions, or pretends to perform actions, which will give the viewer clues as to the subject of the charade—namely, himself. Perhaps he contrives, first, to suggest Frederick the Great, for instance, then to cancel all syllables except the first. Insofar as acting is involved, Fred is not then pretending to be Fred, but pretending to perform certain Fred-indicating actions that *he does not believe he really is performing*. However, he may also simply 'act himself', in which case he imitates his own characteristic behaviour. Charades then merges into the case of the docudrama in which Fred plays himself. In this case, Fred does not pretend that he is Fred, but that he, Fred, is currently performing certain actions of the type he may well believe he did once perform, but which *he does not believe he is now really performing*. Hence what he pretends is not what he believes, and what he believes is not what he pretends.

A similar objection can be given a similar answer. Might not Fred very well believe, it may be suggested, that May has blue eyes and simultaneously visualize her with blue eyes? And since intentionally visualizing something can plausibly be considered a form of imagining in which one makes-believe that one sees it, could Fred then not consistently both make-believe that May has blue eyes and believe she has blue eyes? Only if we fail to consider the case accurately. It is true that Fred may visualize May with blue eyes, and we may grant that visualizing her may be a make-believe form of imagining. But if so, when he visualizes her with blue eyes, what he makes-believe, more carefully described, is that he is visually aware of her blue eyes *when he does not believe that he really is*. It is not that, believing she has blue eyes, Fred makes-believe she has blue eyes, but rather that, believing she has blue eyes, he makes-believe he is currently *visually aware* of her blue eyes.

These objections fail, then. Someone who believes that *p* and pretends or makes-believe that *p* has inconsistent beliefs. How can it happen, though, that someone may indeed have such inconsistent beliefs? How can someone both believe and imagine (make-believe), for instance, that *p*? The answer to this is like that to the question how it can happen that someone both believes and does not believe that *p* (which is not, of course, the same as believing *p* and not-*p*). I may believe that the minister is a scoundrel—that is, I may have the disposition to assent on some occasions to the proposition that he is one—and I may not believe he is a scoundrel—that is, I may have the disposition to withhold assent on other occasions from the proposition that he is one. And

I may fail for some reason to be aware of the two dispositions' co-existence in my mind. Perhaps I know the minister under different descriptions, for instance. Or perhaps I simply fail to bring the two dispositions into relation with each other. And in the same way, Fred may believe—that is, have the disposition to assent to the proposition—that he sold a certain pair of shoes last week, and also imagine in the make-believe sense that he did—that is, either occurrently or dispositionally, non-deceptively pretend to himself that he did when he does not believe that he did. And here, too, Fred may fail for some reason to be aware of the co-existence in his mind of these two dispositions, or of the activity and the disposition.

There is, it is true, a use of 'imagine' according to which someone who believes that *p* may consistently also imagine that *p*. If Fred believes some brogues are size nine, he may, when asked whether they are size nine, express that beliefs (ironically, perhaps) by saying 'I imagine they are.' Though we may thus claim he consistently imagines what he in fact believes, however, this use of the word is not the make-believe use in play in his daydream. For in this context of assessing brogue sizes, 'imagine' is merely a synonym for 'believe' or 'be inclined to believe', so that to say he imagines what he believes is no different from saying merely that he believes or is inclined to believe what he believes. Hence his imagining that *p* in this sense would not be some mental disposition, state or occurrence *different* from that of believing or being inclined to believe that *p*; it would *be* that of believing or being inclined to believe that *p*. This is not the use of the word in which Fred is imagining things in the course of his daydream. Fred does not believe, nor is he inclined to believe, that he is in France or that women dote on him. If he did, he would be suffering from a delusion, not enjoying a daydream. He does not *believe* these things, whether deludedly or not. He *makes-believe* them. He does, on the other hand, believe that his name is Fred, that he likes warm climates, and that France is in Europe. And that is why he cannot consistently imagine, in the relevant sense of 'make-believe', these things; Fred can no more consistently make-believe what he in fact believes than he can consistently pretend to be selling the brogues he believes he is in fact selling.

It is true, too, that if Fred did suffer from the delusion that women doted on him, we might report that fact by announcing he *imagined* that women doted on him. But this use of 'imagine' is synonymous with 'deludedly believe', so that to say that he imagined what he believed would merely be to say that he deludedly believed what he believed. And, as in the previous case, his deludedly believing it would not be some mental disposition, state or occurrence *different* from that of his imagining—it would *be* that of his imagining it. This has nothing to do with the use of 'imagination' in which Fred's daydreaming is imagining.²

If one cannot, in the relevant sense, consistently imagine, or make-believe, what one believes, how did Walton come to make the mistake of thinking

one can? I have already hinted at one possible source of the error. Recognizing that Fred need not *disbelieve* that he is in France whilst imagining he is, Walton may have inferred that Fred may therefore consistently *believe* he is in France whilst imagining he is. But that would be to confuse disbelieving with not believing—manifestly, non-disbelievers are not necessarily believers.

Another, more likely, source of the error may be the fact that Fred, with his geographical knowledge and preference for warm climates, is the subject around which his make-believe is constructed—naturally, for he is daydreaming about *himself*. If we note that he, with his preferences and knowledge, is the subject of his imaginings, it is easy to be seduced into supposing that this is *what* he imagines. But Fred's being the subject of his imaginings in this way no more shows he is what he imagines than does the fact that Moscow and Napoleon feature in Tolstoy's fiction *War and Peace* show that Moscow and Napoleon are fictional. Tolstoy tells a story in which it is fictionally true that things happen to some people and in some places of which it is not fictionally true that *they* exist. And Fred embarks on a daydream in which he imagines things happening to himself, the person he knows has certain preferences and beliefs; but it is not true that he imagines either *himself* or that he has *them*. He, the possessor of those preferences and beliefs, is what he imagines things about, not what he imagines, just as Moscow, with its streets and churches, and Napoleon, the possessor of an *embonpoint* and an attachment to Josephine, are what Tolstoy invents a story about, not what he invents.

Walton would not agree with the remarks about fictionality that I have just made, and his reason for disagreeing may be the main source of his error. 'To call a proposition fictional,' he writes, 'amounts to saying only that it is "true in some fictional world or other".'³ What is a fictional world, then? Walton maintains that a fictional world is constructed when certain imaginings are 'prescribed', and hence that in *War and Peace* Tolstoy constructs a fictional world by prescribing that we imagine *both* such things as that Moscow was the capital of Russia in 1805, and that Napoleon invaded Russia, which he may also assert in the novel, *and* such things as that Napoleon said something on a certain day to a certain person, which he does not assert in the novel, but invents. Thus Walton declares,

Tolstoy does not stop work on his fiction when he writes that Napoleon invaded Russia, even if in writing this he was claiming that Napoleon actually did invade Russia. He constructed a 'fictional world' in which Napoleon not only had had various conversations, the details of which Tolstoy invented, but in which Napoleon also invaded Russia. 'It was by means of making it fictional (in my terms) that Napoleon invaded Russia that Tolstoy asserted that this event actually did occur.

Could an author be claiming truth for every sentence he writes and still be writing fiction? I see no reason why not.⁴

And it is this view that appears to lie behind the earlier claim about the independence of imagination and belief which I have been disputing. Thus,

when he says 'people often imagine what ... they know to be true', he goes on immediately.

Such imaginings are sometimes prescribed. It is fictional in Fred's daydream that he likes warm climates, as he actually does.⁵

But this is not an account of the ordinary meaning of 'fictional', as Walton himself appears to concede in the revealing parenthesis '(in my terms)' quoted above, a parenthesis that suggests, surely, that the use of 'fictional' that Walton is elucidating here is, after all, an idiosyncratic one, not that of common parlance. Yet it is the use of the word in common parlance that he thinks he is clarifying when he asserts that we often imagine what we know is true, and that it is fictional in Fred's daydream that he likes warm climates. It should be no surprise, then, that, so far from charting the existing use, Walton's account actually distorts it. For while we might agree that Moscow, Napoleon, and Napoleon's invasion of Russia all appear in the fictional world of *War and Peace*—that is, they are mentioned in the novel—we would not agree that they are in the ordinary sense *fictional* features of the novel. Certainly, Tolstoy did not 'stop work on his fiction' when he wrote that Napoleon invaded Russia. But our ordinary understanding of that is simply that he did not stop writing his novel, not that he was at that point writing a fictional sentence, or uttering a proposition that was fictional. A condition of a proposition's being fictional, in our ordinary understanding,⁶ is that it is not asserted (hence, not believed) by the person who utters it, not merely that it is one that is prescribed for imaginings. And we do not think that a novel, or 'fictional world', must contain only fictional sentences or propositions.

We may of course follow Walton's usage if we wish, but we should not suppose that in doing so we are clarifying our existing concept of fiction. That concept contrasts what is fictional with what is asserted, what is invented with what is not, what is real with what is imagined. Moreover, by blurring these distinctions, Walton's usage is, I think, not only unusual, but also unfortunate. If we are to explain the fictional in terms merely of what it is prescribed that we imagine, and regard fictional works as those 'whose function is to serve as props in games of make-believe',⁷ we shall, indeed, as Walton suggests, have no reason to deny the status of fiction to some things that are straightforwardly asserted by an author. Not only the 'New Journalism' which he cites,⁸ then, but any newspaper report could be fictional, since the author could, while asserting what he wrote, also be 'prescribing imaginings'. And not only newspaper reports. This use of 'fiction', by obscuring the fundamental distinction between inventing and asserting, 'making it up' and 'saying how it is', would also compel us to classify most poetry and highly figurative discourse as fiction, whether or not it contained assertions; for there, if anywhere, are imaginings prescribed. An historically accurate verse account of

an actual event would be as much fiction as a verse account of an event completely invented by the author. This usage seems to be not only revisionary, then, but also unjustified and confusing.

At the end of Fred's daydream, Walton says, reality reasserts itself. Indeed it does—but more thoroughly than Walton realizes. What Fred imagined, or made-believe, in his daydream was something that he did not believe to be reality, while what he believed to be reality was not what he made-believe or imagined. And he was the non-fictional subject, not a fictional feature, of the fictional world he created. These points are not negligible. A theory that starts off on the wrong foot is unlikely to end on the right one.⁹

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- ¹ Kendall L. Walton, *Mimesis As Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U.P., 1990), p. 13.
- ² An interesting coincidence of both uses occurs in Walton's account of Gregory's mistaking a moss-covered rock for a tree stump (when he was making-believe that tree stumps were bears). Gregory 'did imagine that a bear was there,' Walton writes (*ibid.*, p. 37). 'Imagine' here has both the sense of 'falsely or deludedly believe' and that of 'make-believe'. Gregory falsely believed that fictionally there was a bear there; and he also, because of this false belief, made-believe the rock was a bear.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 35.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.
- ⁶ 'Invented statement or narrative; literature consisting of such narrative.' *Concise Oxford Dictionary*.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 72.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 80.
- ⁹ I should like to thank Peter Lamarque and Tim Moore for helpful comments.

AQUINAS' REASONS FOR THE AESTHETIC IRRELEVANCE OF TASTES AND SMELLS

Neil Campbell

AQUINAS' ACCOUNT of beauty is difficult to reconstruct since it appears only in a fragmentary form, scattered throughout his works. One of the more curious aspects of his aesthetics is his claim that only sight and hearing contribute to the aesthetic appreciation of an object. In a recent article Donald McQueen¹ provides an explanation for this point, but while his explanation is plausible and finds support in Aquinas' texts I think it fails to capture Aquinas' real reasons for this claim. After establishing the important role played by the forms both in Aquinas' three-fold account of beauty and in his ranking of the senses, I argue that deeper reasons become apparent for Aquinas' claims about the aesthetic irrelevance of certain senses. The alternative explanation I offer has the virtue of fitting better with Aquinas' account of sensation and averts an apparent inconsistency with Aquinas' treatment of the senses elsewhere. Finally, I evaluate the plausibility of Aquinas' views regarding his exclusion of touch, taste and smell from the aesthetic appreciation of the beautiful. I hope this discussion will provide more insight into the confusion surrounding the aesthetics of St Thomas Aquinas.²

Aquinas' general descriptions of beauty tend to appear as comparisons with the good. Like the good, beauty requires a relation to a cognitive capacity: 'Beauty relates to a cognitive power, for those things are said to be beautiful which please when seen' (I.5.5.ad 7). This relation, however, does not calm the desire in the sense of reaching an *end* which things seek (as it does with the good), but satisfies a desire for contemplation or sensory intuition:

The beautiful is the same as the good, and they differ in aspect only. For since good is what all seek, the notion of good is what calms the desire; while the notion of the beautiful is that which calms the desire, by being seen or known (122ac.27.1.ad 3).

As McQueen points out, for Aquinas the beautiful thing requires three characteristics: 'integrity or perfection, since those things which are impaired are by that very fact ugly; due proportion or harmony; and lastly, brightness, or clarity,

whence things are called beautiful which have a bright color' (I.39.8). These points call for some elaboration.

Integrity or perfection involves the extent to which an object fulfils its form or has the qualities it should have given the kind of thing it is. In the case of artifacts perfection consists in the extent to which the finished product approximates its formal cause in the artist's mind. The perfection of natural objects consists in the extent to which they have the features they should have according to what they are. For example, a human being should have two eyes since this is proper to the form human being; any eyes more or less would take away from the perfection of that human being and hence detract from its beauty.

There are several ways in which one can understand Aquinas' notion of proportion or harmony since there are several items which might be said to stand in that relation. First, there is the proportion of form to matter. In general, as with God, things are more beautiful to the extent that they are more formal or without matter. Also, since Aquinas here speaks of 'due proportion' individual things are beautiful to the extent that they possess the correct or appropriate proportion of form to matter for things of that kind. Second, there is the proportion of a thing's essence to its existence such that the closer essence and existence converge the more beautiful the thing is. Since God's essence is His existence God is the most beautiful (beauty itself). Finally, we might speak of a teleological proportion such that something is beautiful to the extent that it is able to reach its intended end. This also involves reference to the object's form since the object's telos is bound up with the kind of thing it is.³

The third criterion (clarity or brightness) is, I think, where McQueen's account of Aquinas first encounters difficulty. He correctly points out that there has been some uncertainty about the translation of the Latin '*claritas*' and makes a suggestion about its interpretation that leads in the right direction but he fails to see this through to its logical conclusion:

[C]laritas is something other than, or involves something in addition to, a merely sensible quality such as brightness of colour. In some contexts, perhaps, '*claritas*' is better translated as distinctness or perspicuity rather than as radiance, brightness, brilliance or luminosity.⁴

What McQueen approaches saying, but does not say, is that *claritas* should be understood as the *form* of the thing shining through or making itself perspicuous or known. This interpretation of *claritas* is preferable for two reasons. The first is that it explains something McQueen cannot.⁵ It explains why Aquinas applies the term to spiritual as well as to physical beauty: 'So also beauty of spirit consists in conversation and actions that are well-formed and suffused with intelligence' (222ac.145.2). If we understand *claritas* as the

perspicuity of the form (the form making itself apparent), then Aquinas' remarks here make perfect sense, for clear and intelligent thought must involve knowledge and hence must also involve the forms since they are only proper objects of the intellect. Furthermore, when we consider that Aquinas says that 'the beautiful is that which calms the desire, by being seen or known' (my emphasis), then it becomes natural to think that *claritas* applies to spiritual beauty; to know something is to know the form of the thing.

The second reason this interpretation of *claritas* is preferable is that it removes the apparent difficulties in another passage in Aquinas. Aquinas claims that 'an image is said to be beautiful, if it perfectly represents even an ugly thing' (I.39.8). In McQueen's view this claim is 'difficult to reconcile with the three-condition analysis of beauty'.⁶ If we understand *claritas* as the form of the thing making itself perspicuous, then there is no difficulty here because a perfect representation of a thing must make the form of the ugly thing perspicuous *in order to be* a perfect representation. Since this very cognitive relation itself makes something beautiful it makes sense to speak of a perfect representation of an ugly thing as beautiful. For when Aquinas says that the image 'perfectly represents' its object he must mean that form of the thing is made perspicuous by the representation and that we thereby come to know that thing. Aquinas' claim about representing the ugly thing then, is consistent with his three-fold account of beauty. It would appear to be inconsistent only if one neglects to acknowledge the role of the forms in the perception of beauty.

All three characteristics of the beautiful thing therefore involve some kind of reference to the object's form. Integrity, since it involves reference to the kind of thing it is, and proportion, since the greater the proportion of the form to matter the more beautiful it is. The significance of the object's form is especially important in the case of clarity since, given the cognitive dimension in the perception of beauty, something is beautiful only to the extent to which the form of the thing presents itself or makes itself known. McQueen has not sufficiently acknowledged the importance of the forms in all three of these criteria. This is particularly evident in his confusion concerning the role of *claritas* in spiritual beauty and in the perfect representation of the ugly thing.

Now that the necessary background has been filled in we can get to the main issue. How do we explain Aquinas' exclusion of certain senses as aesthetically irrelevant? The passage that generates this question runs as follows:

[T]hose senses chiefly regard the beautiful, which are the most cognitive, viz., sight and hearing, as ministering to reason; for we speak of beautiful sights and beautiful sounds. But in reference to the other objects of the other senses, we do not use the expression *beautiful*, for we do not speak of beautiful tastes, and beautiful odours (122ae.27.1.ad 3).

This passage itself suggests an answer to our question and that is the one which McQueen naturally adopts. The senses of taste and smell are aesthetic-

ally irrelevant because they lack sufficient cognitive complexity. Of course how we understand the idea of cognitive complexity or why certain senses are more cognitively complex (or more cognitive) than others will be crucial to how we understand Aquinas' claim.

McQueen's interpretation of Aquinas is that sight and hearing are more cognitively complex than the other senses because they range over a greater array of objects and their characteristics. In other words, they are more cognitively complex because they provide more information.⁷ Although McQueen offers some textual evidence in support of this interpretation I find it unconvincing. The problem with this account is that it fails to recognize the role of the forms in the perception of beauty (we already saw this with respect to the three-fold account of beauty) and this is a serious oversight since it is primarily in terms of the reception of the forms that Aquinas ranks the senses. My suggestion is that Aquinas himself accounts for the cognitive differences between the senses in terms of the relative proportion of spiritual to natural immutation permitted by the sensory organs. It is therefore the differentiated capacity of the senses for spiritual immutation that determines the variability of the senses' involvement in the aesthetic. To fully appreciate Aquinas' ranking of the senses then, we need to understand Aquinas' theory of sensation, including the concept of immutation.

The senses are all powers of the soul which proceed from the essence of the soul as their cause. They are not, however, powers the soul has as their subject since a disembodied soul cannot sense. This is because Aquinas thinks the soul requires a 'corporeal instrument' in order to have sensory awareness. Sensation therefore belongs to the composite of soul and body. Aquinas also characterizes the senses as passive powers because they require something to trigger sensations: 'colour is the principle of vision, inasmuch as it moves the sight' (I.77.3).

Since for Aquinas all knowledge has its origins in experience and knowledge is always of what is general or universal it must be that the forms of things are conveyed in sensation and abstracted by the intellectual powers of the soul. In other words, perception involves the reception of the form of a thing without its matter. This process is achieved through what Aquinas calls a 'spiritual immutation':

Now, immutation is of two kinds, one natural, the other spiritual. Natural immutation takes place when the form of that which causes the immutation is received, according to its natural being, into the thing immuted, as heat is received into the thing heated. But spiritual immutation takes place when the form of what causes the immutation is received, according to a spiritual mode of being, into the thing immuted, as the form of color is received into the pupil which does not become colored. Now, for the operation of the senses, a spiritual immutation is required, whereby an intention of the sensible form is effected in the sensible organ. Otherwise, if a natural immutation alone sufficed for the sense's action, all natural bodies would have sensation when they undergo alteration (I.78.3).

So, in the case of natural immutation the body affected itself undergoes a change in quality whereas with spiritual immutation the affected body does not itself undergo any change but does take in the form of the object perceived. The ratio of spiritual to natural immutation (if we can speak that way) is different for every sense organ, which is why Aquinas must treat the *phantasmata* (the images from which the intellectual soul may be said to abstract the forms) as a halfway state between material and immaterial being that admits of varying degrees of corporeality.⁸ Aquinas describes this as follows: 'But in some senses we find spiritual immutation only, as in *sight*, while in others we find not only a spiritual but also a natural immutation, and this either on the part of the object only, or likewise on the part of the organ' (I.78.3). Natural immutation 'on the part of the organ' refers to the extent to which the matter of the sensory organ is itself changed upon receiving the form of the object perceived. A hand that senses heat not only receives the form spiritually but also naturally since the hand itself is warmed when it touches a warm object. Similarly, the tongue which senses sweetness or bitterness is itself changed since it is 'moistened by the humidity of flavors' (ibid.). Natural immutation 'on the part of the object' refers to an 'accidental' natural immutation. In the case of hearing and smelling the ear and the nose are not themselves physically changed as the tongue and skin are but require a medium between the object and the organ which itself changes:

On the part of the object, we find local natural immutation in sound, which is the object of *hearing*; for sound is caused by percussion and commotion of the air. We find natural immutation by alteration in odor, which is the object of *smelling*; for in order to give off an odor, a body must in a measure be affected by heat (ibid.).

The sense of sight, Aquinas claims, involves no natural immutation since the eye itself is not coloured when it perceives a coloured object and the air through which the light reflecting the object moves is also unchanged, since it is transparent.

The important thing about these observations is that it is in terms of the degrees of natural and spiritual immutation that Aquinas ranks the senses:

Now, the sight, which is without natural immutation either in its organ or in its object, is the most spiritual, the most perfect, and the most universal of all the senses. After this comes the hearing and then the smell, which require a natural immutation on the part of the object; while local motion is more perfect than, and naturally prior to, the motion of alteration, as the Philosopher proves. Touch and taste are the most material of all Hence it is that the three other senses are not exercised through a medium united to them, to obviate any natural immutation in their organ; as happens as regards these two senses (ibid.)

McQueen correctly points out that the ranking of the senses in this passage coincides with Aquinas' ranking of the senses in terms of their aesthetic relev-

ance but he has ignored Aquinas' own reasons for putting the senses in this order.⁹ It is clearly not the case that what determines a sense's cognitive importance is the sheer quantity of the information passed on to the sensory organ. Rather, it is the proportion of spiritual to natural immutation permitted by the sensory organ that determines a sense's cognitive importance.

Still, it might be asked why a higher proportion of spiritual to natural immutation makes a sense more *cognitively* complex. The key to understanding Aquinas, I think, lies in recognizing the role played by the forms in the perception of beauty—particularly in the case of *claritas*. I propose that Aquinas thinks some senses are more cognitively complex than others because, relative to other senses lower down the scale, they convey the form of the thing in a purer manner since there is less matter involved in the actual process of sensation itself. Schematically we could say the following: the less matter the clearer the form, the clearer the form the more *claritas*, and the more *claritas* the more beauty.

This interpretation fits nicely with the passage in which Aquinas excludes the senses of smell and touch (and taste) from the appreciation of the beautiful; for he says there 'those senses chiefly regard the beautiful, which are the most cognitive, viz., sight and hearing, as ministering to reason ...' (122ae.27.1.ad 3). The phrase 'ministering to reason' is extremely important; for the objects of reason are the forms so it is natural that those senses that best convey the forms will be the ones that best convey beauty. This is why it is important to acknowledge the role of the forms in Aquinas' three-fold account of beauty. This also fits with Aquinas' claim (122ae.27.1.ad 3) that 'the notion of the beautiful is that which calms the desire, by being seen or known' (my emphasis). Since the forms are the objects of knowledge and perceiving the beautiful is a cognitive relation involving knowledge, the more clearly the form of the thing is immutated, the better we can know it. My account of cognitive complexity, then, fits better with Aquinas' overall view and by comparison provides a stronger link with aesthetic relevance than McQueen's does.

There is a further virtue to my account of Aquinas. When one employs McQueen's explanation of cognitive complexity Aquinas ends up contradicting himself. On my account, however, the contradiction is averted.

McQueen points out that in his *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle* Aquinas offers a different ranking of the senses than he does in the *Summa Theologiae*. In this other work Aquinas ranks touch above hearing:

Sight informs us of many differences between things, for we seem to know sensible things best by means of sight and touch, but especially by means of sight. The reason for this can be drawn from the fact that the other three senses perceive those accidents which in a way flow from a sensible body and do not remain in it. Thus sound comes from a sensible body inasmuch as it flows away from it and does not remain in it. The same thing is true of the evaporation of volatile

elements, with which and by which odor is diffused. But sight and touch ... perceive those accidents which remain in sensible bodies, such as color, warmth and coldness. Hence the judgment of sight and touch is extended to things themselves, whereas the judgment of hearing and smell is extended to those accidents which flow from things and not to things themselves. It is for this reason that figure and size and the like, by which a sensible being itself is disposed, are perceived more by sight and touch than by the other senses. And they are perceived more by sight than by touch ...¹⁰

As McQueen suggests, since no such claim about sight and touch is to be found in the relevant section of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* the claim must be Aquinas' own. This would certainly appear to be inconsistent with the ranking of hearing above touch described earlier. McQueen says he can offer no satisfactory explanation for this apparent inconsistency and so leaves the problem unresolved.¹¹

I would argue that there is no inconsistency here because the senses are in fact ranked according to different criteria in the mentioned works. In this passage Aquinas' point about 'accidents which in a way flow from a sensible body' is meant to explain why sight and touch inform us about more 'differences between things' than the other senses do. It is therefore implied that the senses are ranked in this passage according to the criteria McQueen has identified (i.e. the sheer volume of information conveyed by a particular sense). If we understand Aquinas' claim in the *Summa* as McQueen does, then an inconsistency certainly does arise and it is no wonder McQueen cannot explain it away. However, I have been suggesting that we should *not* agree with McQueen about the criteria Aquinas uses to rank the senses in the *Summa*. If we disagree with McQueen and deny that the senses are ranked in the *Summa* according to the amount of information they convey, then this passage from Aquinas' commentary on Aristotle implies no inconsistency; for here the senses are ranked according to different criteria. In the *Summa* hearing is ranked above touch because the sense of hearing permits a greater proportion of spiritual to natural immutation than the sense of touch does. In the commentary on Aristotle touch is ranked above hearing because touch conveys more information about the features of bodies than hearing does. Recognizing that the senses are ranked according to different criteria in these two works shows that they are not inconsistent with each other.

It is not surprising or unusual for Aquinas to provide different means of ranking the same items. In the passages on sensation in the *Summa* Aquinas identifies several ways in which the powers of the soul may be ordered: 'Accordingly we may observe a triple order among them, two of which correspond to the dependence of one power on another, while the third is taken from the order of the objects' (I.77.5). The powers of the soul may be ordered according to the order of nature or (in which case the order is inverted) according to the order of generation and time, or finally according to their

objects. One can hardly be surprised that Aquinas identifies another means of ordering the senses in another work. A further consideration that alleviates the charge of inconsistency is the fact that in his commentary on Aristotle Aquinas does not link the relative importance of the senses with aesthetic relevance, as McQueen notices.¹² This should give us a clue that Aquinas' reasons for ranking the senses here are different from his reasons for ranking them in the *Summa* and so are (as it appears) probably ranked according to different criteria.

Now that I have defended Aquinas as best I can from charges of inconsistency I would like to evaluate the soundness of his account. For the sake of argument I will presume that Aquinas has ranked the senses in the appropriate order according to the criteria I have attributed to him.

We have seen that one of the characteristics of the beautiful thing is that it possesses proportion or harmony. My question is: Do we not frequently attribute such properties to food? For instance, do we not say in the evaluation of a meal as good that it possesses the right proportion of flavours or that its spices are balanced in an effective manner? If so, then should we not say of such a meal not only that it is delicious but also that it is beautiful? If this is the case, then Aquinas is simply mistaken in his exclusion of taste from the aesthetically relevant senses. (A similar argument could be made for the other senses.)

It seems to me that there are a few things Aquinas could say to this objection. First, he might say (as he does say) that we do not speak 'of beautiful tastes and beautiful odours' (122ae.27.I.ad 3). Statements such as 'that's a beautiful tasting meal' do not reflect our ordinary discourse so we should not say that things like meals are beautiful, at least not because of the way they taste. Of course an appeal to the structure of ordinary discourse is hardly decisive because ordinary discourse can change. While it may be true that we do not as a matter of fact speak of beautiful meals (I doubt if this is true) this hardly expresses a necessary truth. What we want are philosophical reasons to exclude the application of the term 'beautiful' to things like food and we can hardly say that it implies a contradiction to say that a meal tastes beautiful.

A more compelling response to my objection might be that what Aquinas means by 'harmony' or 'proportion' is not *mere* harmony or proportion of parts but a harmony or proportion of parts appropriate for things of that kind. As I pointed out earlier this is in fact implied by Aquinas (I.39.8) when he speaks of 'due proportion'. There is, he could say, no due proportion of constituent parts for meals of any kind because such items do not, properly speaking, have forms. Since there is no *proper* proportion of elements for a meal it does not capture the sense of proportion that applies to the beautiful object when one speaks of the proportion of different flavours in a meal. This reply is unconvincing for two reasons. First, it is unclear why we cannot speak about the form of a good meal as it exists in the mind of the chef who

made it in which case talk about the proportion of flavours would capture the relevant sense of proportion as it can for any artifact. Second, we could talk about the meal as possessing a teleological proportion to the extent that it can fulfil its end: nourishing the body. One of the ways in which the meal achieves this end is by tasting good since a terrible tasting meal will not be likely to convince the diner to eat it. In either case we can retain a reference to the proportion of flavours and so it still makes sense to describe the meal as beautiful.

Aquinas' final response is the most plausible but as we shall see it introduces a far more serious problem for his claims about the aesthetic irrelevance of taste and smell. Aquinas might point out that the sense of taste is the least perfect of all the senses because, relative to the other senses, it involves the highest degree of natural immutation in the sense organ. The result of this high degree of natural immutation is that the form of the thing sensed is not presented as clearly as it would be by the other senses, and since the reception of the form is crucial for the appreciation of beauty the way a thing tastes is insufficient for us to reach a judgement about its aesthetic status. This seems quite plausible. Consider for instance the difficulty we ordinarily have distinguishing between a lime and a lemon on the sole basis of how they taste. The sense of taste often fails to be discriminating enough to identify and individuate objects. But then of course the same can be said of sight. Just think of the last time you mistook the salt for the sugar. There we have two objects that cannot be distinguished from one another on the basis of how they look but can be distinguished on the basis of how they taste. Of course this represents a rare exception. Generally speaking Aquinas is right; the forms of things are more discernible by sight than by taste. One cannot taste the form 'rational animal'.

While I like this response and I think it is the one Aquinas would appeal to, it introduces a serious problem. It should be clear that the proportion of natural to spiritual immutation which determines the relative ranking of each sense is a function varying only by degrees. That is, the only reason smell is ranked above touch and taste is that it involves less natural immutation on the part of its sensory organ than touch and taste do. If it is only a matter of degree that determines the cognitive complexity of a sense though, then how can Aquinas justify including hearing as aesthetically relevant but excluding smell, touch and taste as aesthetically irrelevant? The separation appears arbitrary. This is especially true for hearing and smell since they are grouped together by Aquinas with respect to the type and degree of natural immutation involved in each. They both involve 'accidental' natural immutation because in order to sense their organs both require a medium (the air) which itself changes. Since there appears to be no difference of kind or of degree of natural immutation between hearing and smell it seems arbitrary to treat one but not the other as aesthetically relevant.

It seems to me that there are only two possible responses available to Aquinas here. If he is to be consistent, then it seems that Aquinas must either include the sense of smell in his list of aesthetically relevant senses, in which case he would have to speak of beautiful smells, or he could exclude the sense of hearing from his list and claim that the sense of sight is the only one that reveals beauty.

The first of these solutions might only patch the problem temporarily. If Aquinas were to treat the sense of smell as aesthetically relevant, then the same problem presents itself with respect to the other senses. One might claim that touch and taste also differ only in degree (of natural immutation) from hearing and smell and so it is likewise arbitrary to exclude them. Aquinas, though, is on better ground to respond to the objection at this level because he makes a case for a distinction in kind between these senses. Recall that what determines the ranking of touch and taste below smell is that they involve a natural immutation in the sensory organs themselves whereas hearing and smell do not. Whether this really involves a difference of kind rather than of degree is difficult to determine. Suffice to say that while Aquinas can offer this response his position remains tenuous.

The second manner in which Aquinas might develop a more consistent view would be if he were to limit the aesthetically relevant senses to sight alone. This suggestion is on firmer footing than the other one because Aquinas has already made a distinction in kind between sight and the other senses since sight involves no natural immutation at all. In this case, though, Aquinas cannot refer to beautiful sounds, which is very counterintuitive. These difficulties show that Aquinas' claim that sight and hearing are the only aesthetically relevant senses is an extremely unstable and contentious one.

I aimed to establish several points. The first thing I have tried to emphasize is the important role played by the forms in Aquinas' account of beauty. We have seen that Aquinas' three-fold criteria for the beautiful thing (integrity, proportion and clarity) involve reference to the form of the thing perceived and that it is a sense's capacity for the reception of the object's form that determines the aesthetic relevance of that sense. In developing this explanation for Aquinas' exclusion of certain senses from involvement in the aesthetic I have also suggested an alternative understanding of *claritas* as the perspicuity of the form of the thing perceived which, I think, fits better with Aquinas' overall treatment of perception. By clarifying the criteria Aquinas employs to rank the senses in the *Summa Theologiae* I have shown that contrary to McQueen's suggestion, Aquinas does not contradict himself when he offers an alternative ranking of the senses in the *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*. Finally I hope to have shown that despite Aquinas' ingenuity in his

account of the role of the senses in the appreciation of the aesthetic, his claim that touch, taste and smell have no aesthetic relevance is extremely problematic.¹³

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- ³ I owe these suggestions to Professor Jill LeBlanc
- ⁴ McQueen, op. cit., p. 347.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Ibid., p. 348.
- ⁷ Ibid., p. 349-350. For an explicit formulation of what McQueen thinks complexity consists in see pp. 351-352
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NON-VERBAL METAPHOR: A NON-EXPLANATION OF MEANING IN DANCE

Julie Van Camp

DOES DANCE have 'meaning'? The question has long engaged philosophers, critics, and other theorists of dance.¹ Trevor Whittock proposed in this journal that much (though not all) meaning in dance can be understood as non-verbal metaphor,² an intriguing proposal that sheds worthwhile light on the elusive art form of dance.³

Whittock's work follows in the vein mined by other writers who shun Cartesian dualisms and analysis in general.⁴ Whittock has tried to provide a non-verbal account of meaning in this 'post-analytic' tradition, but I would submit that he has failed in this endeavour. Whittock has not made a convincing case that there is such a thing as non-verbal metaphor or that it accounts for meaning in dance. Indeed, he has stretched the concept of metaphor so much that he might be said to use the concept, at most, metaphorically.⁵

LINGUISTIC METAPHOR

Traditionally, metaphor has been considered a linguistic device and has been discussed extensively by numerous philosophers.⁶ In his consideration of metaphor, the late Monroe C. Beardsley always assumed that it was a linguistic device, as has Nelson Goodman.⁷ For both, the element of mistake or contradiction was central to their explanation. More recent work has emphasized the cognitive contribution of metaphor, while still considering it a linguistic utterance.⁸

Beardsley said that metaphor rests on a 'Verbal Opposition', in which there are 'two levels of meaning', a 'central meaning', or denotation, and a 'marginal meaning', or connotation.⁹ Metaphor thus involves 'a logical conflict of central meaning'.¹⁰ According to Beardsley's explanation, metaphor involves 'controversion':

... a significant attribution that is either indirectly self-contradictory or obviously false in its context, and in which the modifier connotes characteristics that can be attributed, truly or falsely, to the subject.¹¹

In his later work, Beardsley acknowledged

... that the meaning of a metaphorical word cannot be limited to its pre-existing connotations: the metaphor transforms what were previously contingent properties of the things referred to ... into meanings ...¹²

Goodman explains metaphor as a conflict in categories, 'a calculated category-mistake',¹³ '... a matter of teaching an old word new tricks—of applying an old label in a new way.'¹⁴ As did Beardsley, Goodman notes a self-contradiction or falsehood in metaphor: 'Application of a term is metaphorical only if to some extent contra-indicated.'¹⁵ For both, the possibility of these category-mistakes depends on the pre-existence of verbal categories where meaning is already established.

NON-VERBAL METAPHOR

Whitlock argues that we can speak meaningfully of 'metaphor' in dance because category-mistakes exist in the art form. He explains metaphor in general '... as a special way of recategorizing things by forcing an unusual and unexpected context upon them.'¹⁶ To this extent his account is consistent with those of Beardsley and Goodman. Whitlock also makes the novel claim that the categories in question might be 'non-verbal' categories.¹⁷ But in summarizing his argument, he immediately hedges: 'Some categories are *primarily* non-verbal.'¹⁸ Nowhere does he claim that categories relevant to dance are or could be *exclusively* non-verbal. So even if these non-verbal categories provide an explanation of meaning, they apparently still include some verbal element, which Whitlock never explains.

What is a category that is 'non-verbal' or 'primarily non-verbal'? Whitlock's main example is 'sense of balance'.¹⁹ He considers this a 'non-verbal' category as it '... can hardly be said to be a verbally derived classification'.²⁰ For Whitlock, 'non-verbal' does *not* mean that it lacks a verbal label, such as 'sense of balance'. Rather, a category is non-verbal because we *derive* the classification from something other than words. What does it mean to 'derive' a classification? Apparently it means to *learn it* or *learn about it* through non-verbal behaviour or experience. He says, 'No one ever acquired the skill of riding a bicycle by simply reading about it.'²¹

But a critical confusion occurs in this example. Acquiring a skill is *learning it*, while reading about it is *learning about it*. *Learning* and *learning about* are different. We may have learned *how* to ride a bike by doing it, but did we learn that it was a *category* simply by doing it? Did we learn what label to put on the category simply by doing it? Granted that we learn to *do* many things by non-verbal experience, it does not follow that we learned to *categorize* them in the absence of language. Whitlock's key mistake here is confusing the ways in which we learn to *do* something and the ways in which we learn to *categorize*

the doing of that thing. He has not shown that learning to do something necessarily or even typically results in our being able to categorize that thing.

We can readily concede that experiencing something often is important in being *able* to categorize that thing. Indeed, we might wonder whether there are any categories we learned about *solely* by reading about them. We seem to learn about *all* categories, in part, through experience. We learn about emotions, in part, by experiencing them. We learn about colours, in part, by experiencing them. But that does not mean that 'emotion' or 'sadness' or 'colour' or 'redness' are 'non-verbal' categories.

Whittock's example of bicycle-riding fails to prove his point that non-verbal categories exist. The failure is two-fold. First, learning to do something does not necessarily mean learning to categorize it. Second, our ability to categorize anything seems to result, in part, from non-verbal experiences.

Whittock's central notion of a non-verbal category thus is problematic. He nowhere denies that we use words to characterize and communicate about these 'non-verbal', experiential categories. Nor has he argued that verbal categories are learned about independently of non-verbal experiences. So the first problem with his key notion is making sense of it: 'non-verbal category' does not distinguish anything clearly different from verbal categories.

THE MEANING OF DANCE

Whittock's argument that dance can be understood as non-verbal metaphor depends on his notion of a non-verbal category, but he has failed to make a convincing case that there *are* non-verbal categories distinct from verbal categories. Let us now consider the steps of his argument to see the consequences of this problem.

He first argues that 'some metaphors may be generated by an interaction in which at least one of the items belongs to a non-verbal category.'²² If most (if not all) categories are non-verbal in the limited sense that they are *learned*, in part, through non-verbal experience, this would be true. Does his statement mean that some categories are special in being non-verbal? But he nowhere insists that a category could be or must be *exclusively* non-verbal, as noted earlier. So it is not clear what is special about 'some metaphors'.

The next step of his argument is to note that 'Dance depends upon the utilization of non-verbal skills, and hence upon items from non-verbal categories.'²³ Clearly, dance does depend on movement, which is a non-verbal skill. Balancing, moving with speed, jumping, posing, and so forth seem to be examples of what he means by non-verbal skills. Are these 'non-verbal skills' also 'non-verbal categories' as he suggests? We could agree that these are non-verbal categories in the limited sense that we learn them through non-verbal experience. But we still put verbal labels on them. As noted, learning to do something does not necessarily mean we have learned to categorize that thing. Although dance teachers regularly teach by demonstration,

they also put verbal labels on the skills they teach.²⁴ The case still has not been made that there are clearly distinguished non-verbal categories.

As the next step of his argument, Whittock notes that 'Dance also not infrequently deals with non-verbal ranges of material, and hence also with items that belong to non-verbal categories.'²⁵ He does not explain what he means by 'ranges of material' as something distinct from the earlier-mentioned 'non-verbal skills'. Perhaps he means something like 'a range of emotions'. But again, he has not shown that these categories are exclusively or even primarily non-verbal. Experiencing an emotion is not necessarily the same thing as *categorizing* the experience as an emotion.

His next claim is even more troublesome: 'Where dance invites us to envisage one item in terms of another from a different category it will create metaphors.'²⁶ The difficulty with this claim becomes clear when he presents an example. He uses *Apollo*, a work by George Balanchine, with 'gestures and movements ... [that] are rich with metaphor.'²⁷ One such example: Terpsichore's '... curved arms holding her lyre above her head suggest the instrument, while her feet plucking at the ground give the playing of it.'²⁸ In this example, the lyre is the 'tenor' or 'target subject' of the metaphor while the curved arms and pawing feet are the 'vehicle' or 'imported domain'.²⁹

Granted, it could be argued that a 'category-mistake' in some sense is present, thus meeting a crucial requirement of such theorists as Beardsley and Goodman. Arms and feet in certain positions belong to a category having to do with movement, while 'lyre' belongs to a category having to do with musical instruments. We can restate this easily as a simile, another literary device, which explicitly notes that there are similarities between two things: 'The dancer's curved arms and pawing feet are like a lyre.' We can imagine a dance critic using such a simile to describe the visual impression of the dancer.

But the restatement of this simile as a metaphor seems peculiar: 'The dancer's curved arms and pawing feet *are* a lyre.' The explanation of this peculiarity shows the deficiency of Whittock's proposal. While the critic, using words, might make a metaphor in the sense of a category-mistake. Balanchine does not seem to have made any such mistake. Rather, Balanchine is using the human body to *represent* or *depict* a lyre. We clearly are aware of the referential character of the body to the musical instrument. This reference is insightful and creative on Balanchine's part. But the creativity here does not result from making the sort of mistake required for metaphor.

Indeed, it is not clear what it would be for Balanchine to make a mistake in this context. Should human bodies only represent other human bodies? Should they only represent the same gender? the same race? the same age? the same health condition? the same social class? Could mistakes be a matter of artistic mistakes resulting in a lack of aesthetic value? Could they be moral choices, such as making an artistic choice that sends an undesirable moral

message? There do not appear to be any rules for determining what would count as a mistake of the sort on which Whittock relies.

Goodman might say that the human body in *Apollo* is being used to *denote* the lyre. He says that denotation in dance sometimes 'reorganize[s] experience, relating actions not usually associated or distinguishing others not usually differentiated.'³⁰ This sounds remarkably similar to Whittock's characterization of metaphor 'as a special way of recategorizing things by forcing an unusual and unexpected context upon them.'³¹ But 'reorganizing' is not the same thing as 'making a mistake'. For there to be a mistake, I would submit, we must first have a standard vocabulary for what a raised arm and pawing feet 'should' mean or 'normally' mean. We have no such standardized rules in dance. A raised arm could be reaching for a cupboard door in the kitchen or it could be stretching in fatigue or it could be signalling a teacher in a classroom that one has something to say. We have no standard vocabulary for what a raised arm 'means' and thus no possibility of mistake for violating the rules of a standard vocabulary.³²

Without the tension of mistake, we lose a key element of metaphor, as understood in a literary context. There is no established dictionary of movement and thus no such possibility of mistake. Clearly the movement counts as representation or as denotation. But is this a metaphor?

One element of dance does seem to meet the requirement for a lexicon of movement and thus the possibility of mistake: traditional mime of the sort seen in the old nineteenth-century 'story-ballets', such as *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Giselle*. For example, arms crossed at the wrist with fists closed is the traditional mime for 'death'. The limited benefit of this mime for salvaging Whittock's non-verbal metaphor lies in the fact that such mime is now a museum relic, unheard of in dances choreographed in the twentieth century and severely limited in revivals of the old story-ballets. It no longer seems to be 'dancing' to contemporary audiences and is included only for sentimental reasons nowadays.

Other problems with Whittock's approach are worth noting. In literary uses, we contrast metaphorical use with literal use. There does not seem to be any such contrast with his examples of 'non-verbal metaphors' in dance. What would be the literal use of a raised arm in dance? We would have a literal use only if there were a standard lexicon of meaning for movement, as there is for discursive languages. There is no such lexicon of movement, except for traditional mime. But these are linguistic exercises, not 'non-verbal mistakes'.³³

In literary analyses of metaphor, we have a sense that some category-mistakes are metaphors while other category-mistakes are nonsense. What would nonsense be in dance? Would that be a representative that was so obscure no one could figure it out unless told? Would that not be simply a

poor attempt at representation? Paradoxically, then, in attempting to clarify the nature of meaning, Whittock's notion of non-verbal metaphor results in loss of clarity in our understanding of 'literal', 'nonsense', and other dimensions of meaning.

Whittock says that in a typical dance metaphor, as he understands it, there is a 'reference' to something.³⁴ He also notes that some movements can 'exemplify' other things.³⁵ Goodman, too, said that dance movement can exemplify certain properties, and his account of exemplification in dance includes some elements of Whittock's non-verbal metaphor. Dance movements, Goodman says, can 'exemplify ... rhythms and dynamic shapes',³⁶ which thus 'reorganize experience, relating actions not usually associated or distinguishing others not usually differentiated, thus enriching allusion or sharpening discrimination.'³⁷ But Goodman's sense of extension or enrichment of dance vocabularies and meanings omits the notion of 'mistake' critical to metaphor and he nowhere considers exemplification to be metaphor. Goodman has provided useful tools for analyzing dance. Whittock's further claim that this sort of creativity constitutes a 'non-verbal metaphor' does not improve that understanding. He has merely superimposed a new label on the complex phenomenon of meaning, a label that adds nothing to our understanding.

If metaphor only means juxtaposing categories in unfamiliar ways, then we have lost much of what makes metaphor interesting and challenging in a literary context. If we use 'metaphor' to refer to all the techniques through which dance has meaning, we are using 'metaphor' only metaphorically. So we might call literary metaphors 'metaphor₁' and non-verbal metaphors in dance 'metaphor₂'. Metaphor₂, like metaphor₁, involves combinations of categories that are not routine. But the combinations in metaphor₂ are not clearly mistakes, as they are in metaphor₁.

My objection is not to the exploration of metaphor in a non-linguistic context. It still might be shown that accepted rules for artistic 'languages' or 'vocabularies' have been violated in such a way as to meet the requisite mistake for metaphor. These languages need not be traditional verbal languages of the sort used in literature. My objection, rather, is to the muddying of the notion of metaphor by claiming it involves an 'unusual and unexpected context' that 'recategorizes' something, when there is no standard for what counts as usual and unusual, expected and unexpected.

MEANING FOR WHOM?

Could Whittock's proposal be salvaged by distinguishing the nature of meaning for different participants in the creation, performance, and appreciation of dance? Might the notion of a non-verbal metaphor make sense in explaining the meaning of a dance to a dancer performing the movement? Is the meaning of dance something different entirely for those who create the movement

design (the choreographers)? Is meaning something else again for the audience who appreciates the performance? for the critic who writes about and explains the performance? for the historian who characterizes the performance in relationship to other works?

Francis Sparshott painstakingly laid out a variety of ways in which we could consider the issue of the meaning of dance. He noted that 'the very fact of dance has meaning. The fact that a society dances tells something about that society ...'.³⁸ Could this meaning be a non-verbal metaphor, something we learn about through bodily category-mistakes? This sense seems rather to refer to the significance of dance made clear by the study of cultural activities in anthropology, sociology, history, and other cultural studies. Thus the 'fact' of dance does not seem to involve any mistake and thus no sense of metaphor.

From the perspective of the dancer, a certain activity can have meaning as dance. The dancer recognizes that she is participating in a cultural phenomenon considered to be dance. This sense of meaning seems to be one of categorization from among a variety of cultural categories with which the dancer is familiar. The meaning or awareness for the dancer does not seem to involve any miscategorization, but instead a sense that the activity engaged in is included within a category recognized in society to which that label is applied.

The dancer can find meaning in the performance not only in knowing the fact that what she is doing is categorized as dance. The particular dance itself could have some meaning for the dancer. This seems to be the principal area where dancers 'feel' their experience and consider it to be 'meaning' in some non-verbal sense. Could this be a category-mistake of the requisite sort? Even here, the existence of mistake depends on there being a standard for what counts as correct or incorrect usage.

The audience can obtain meaning in the performance it sees. This might happen by categorizing the elements of the overall performance in ways that relate the performance to other things in the experience of the audience. A movement might be symbolic or expressive in some way. The movement might be referential.³⁹ It might also be a discrete language such as traditional mime in which a particular bodily movement specifically referred to a set meaning.

Third parties might characterize something as dance even if the persons engaged in the activity do not so characterize it. Visitors from another culture, for example, might be impressed by the movements of persons waiting for a bus in the cold, jumping around to stay warm, and consider that a dance. This still seems to be a linguistic activity, *viz.*, recognizing something as belonging to a certain category. The visitors categorize it in one way, drawing from their own culture, even if the 'dancer' does not so categorize it. So there is a mistake in categorizing by the visitors, at least from the perspective of the resident. Is this a metaphor? No, because the *meaning* to the visitors does not result from any awareness of the category mistake. The meaning results from recognizing

the movement in a category familiar to the visitor that provided conceptual structures. Recognizing it as dance might be a mistake to the resident. But the meaning to the visitor is not from the *awareness* of the mistake, as in metaphor, but *in spite of* a mistake not known to the visitor. So, once again, the notion of metaphor does not account for the meaning of this 'dance'.

CONCLUSION

In literary analyses, we recognize the value of metaphor. As Beardsley noted, it is '... a convenient, extraordinarily flexible and capacious device for extending the resources of language, by creating novel senses of words for particular purposes and occasions.'⁴⁰ In dance, human movement can be used to represent an extraordinary range of things, limited only by the imagination of the choreographer. But the range is wide in comparison with other choreography, not in comparison with any sense of standardized usage as we have with verbal language. This range does not make those movement designs 'metaphors'. We need only note that movement can represent or depict or communicate meaning in a wide range of ways.

The real challenge in understanding meaning in dance is to explain why certain movements seem to have meaning, while others do not. This challenge is particularly daunting in an era when such great choreographers as Balanchine and Merce Cunningham⁴¹ have denied that movement has meaning at all. Calling dance movement a 'non-verbal metaphor' does not help us solve this problem. It only muddles a perfectly useful literary idea.

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REFERENCES

¹ See e.g. Francis Sparshott, 'Some Dimensions of Dance Meaning', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (1985), 101-114. A revised version of this essay appeared as Chapter 4 of Francis Sparshott, *Off the Ground: First Steps to a Philosophical Consideration of the Dance* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1988), pp. 167-187.

Selma Jeanne Cohen, In 'Some Theories of Dance in Contemporary Society', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1950), 111-118, surveys the work of several writers and concludes that they '... agree that dance is an art capable of representing and communicating ideas valuable to society', p. 117, however, she does not in this early essay explore philosophically how this

representation and communication occur. A few years later, she offered a dance-historical survey of how choreographers use human movement to represent persons, events, and emotions. Selma Jeanne Cohen, 'Dance as an Art of Imitation', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 12 (1953), 232-236.

David Best considered how dance has meaning in *Expression in Movement & the Arts* (London: Lepus Books, 1974) (see especially Section B on 'Meaning'). He offered an explanation of how the human body could be expressive without relying on the Cartesian dualism of mind and body. His rejection of traditional verbal categories to explain meaning in dance seems to be consistent with Whittock's later work, but Best does

not consider the notion of metaphor. In a later work, *Philosophy and Human Movement* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978), Best rejects the view that 'symbolism' explains meaning in human movement and, indeed, he questions whether language itself is symbolic, Chapter 8, especially p. 124.

- ² Trevor Whittock, 'The Role of Metaphor in Dance', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (1992), pp. 242-249. This article appears to be a preliminary application to dance of ideas developed in more detail in Whittock's book, *Metaphor and Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1990). The problems identified in my paper here do not appear to be addressed in this earlier volume, although space does not permit an analysis of his work on film.

Whittock himself has offered several ways in which dance 'communicates' 'ideas and values in addition to feelings' by 'express(ing) emotions and their attached concepts ... through symbolisms, through mimetic and other modes of allusion ...'; review of Graham McFee, *The Concept of Dance Education*, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (1993), p. 183. Nowhere in his own comments on the issues in this review does Whittock mention non-verbal metaphor or categories.

- ³ The notion that dance as a cultural phenomenon is in some sense a metaphor for other things is not new, although Whittock has a rather different interest in metaphor. In a chapter entitled 'Dance as Metaphor: World as Dance', in *Off the Ground*, op. cit., p. 83, Sparshott noted that 'the analogy between danced order and cosmic order has a long and distinguished history.' By this he suggests that the meaning of dance in Europe had traditionally come from 'cosmic symbolism, the dancing bodies figuring emblematically as heavenly bodies'.
- ⁴ E.g. George Lakoff and Mark Turner, *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), cited in Whittock, 'Role of Metaphor', p. 249, n. 6. See also, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and*

Reason (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

Another tradition has long questioned the reluctance to analyse dance. E.g. Maxine Greene, 'Aesthetic Education and the Dance', in *Philosophical Essays on Dance*, op. cit., pp. 16-23, argued against claims that dance is best understood exclusively through non-verbal experiences. Although aesthetic appreciation '... builds upon participatory experiences, perceptual experiences, particular encounters with performances', pp. 22-23, it also demands 'some sort of conceptual knowing', p. 21.

- ⁵ Whittock himself, in *Metaphor and Film*, op. cit., p. 1, asks, 'Is "cinematic metaphor" itself a metaphor only, or do metaphors really exist in films?'

- ⁶ Sparshott seems to assume that metaphor is a linguistic device, as when he mentions 'analogy', 'symbolism', and 'imagery and rhetoric' *Off the Ground*, op. cit., p. 83. These same concepts are used in an extended analysis of metaphor by Eva Feder Kittay, who notes that Aristotle understood '... the cognitive importance of metaphor, particularly metaphor based on analogy'. *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1987), p. 2. For an overview of numerous proposals for explaining metaphor, see Monroe C. Beardsley, 'Metaphor', *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. V, edited by Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1967), pp. 284-289. Another example of the extensive attention to metaphor is *On Metaphor*, edited by Sheldon Sacks (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

- ⁷ Although numerous philosophers and other theorists have considered metaphor, Goodman and Beardsley represent well-developed and well-regarded approaches which demonstrate the problems with Whittock's analysis. Space limitations do not permit an analysis of the numerous alternative approaches, but the discussion here is sufficient, I believe, to demonstrate the difficulties with Whittock's approach.

- ⁸ Kittay takes this approach in *Metaphor*, op. cit., see e.g. pp. 14-15. She acknowledges that 'We can have metaphor in dance ...', p. 14, but she insists '... that only

through its expression in some representational system can we grasp the structure of metaphor, and the most elaborated representational system available to us is linguistic', p. 15. She leaves open the possibility, though seemingly with great scepticism, that her approach might be revised 'given an available representation of an extra-linguistic conceptual structure—if such were indeed possible'.

⁹ Beardaley, *Encyclopedia*, op. cit., p. 286

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Monroe C Beardaley, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*, 2nd edn. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1981), p. 142. Kittay's recent work emphasizing the cognitive significance of metaphor also relies on the interaction of two concepts, op. cit., e.g. pp. 14, n. 1, p. 15.

¹² Beardaley, *Aesthetics*, op. cit., p. xxxiv.

¹³ Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1968), p. 73.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 69.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Whittock, 'Role of Metaphor', op. cit., p. 244.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 245.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 246. Emphasis added.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 245.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., p. 246.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Whittock himself, in his Review, op. cit., p. 184, notes ways in which dance teachers use verbal concepts in teaching: e.g. 'view[ing] and discuss[ing]' '“master works”', 'think[ing] reflexively about what they are doing'.

²⁵ Whittock, 'Role of Metaphor', op. cit., p. 246.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 247.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 247 and n. 6. Whittock uses the 'tenor' and 'vehicle' terminology from I. A. Richards. I use them here although, as noted by Beardaley, they have a 'tendency to vary

in sense' Beardaley, *Encyclopedia*, op. cit., p. 285.

³⁰ Goodman, op. cit., p. 65.

³¹ Whittock, 'Role of Metaphor', op. cit., p. 244.

³² Paul Ziff has questioned whether dance should really count as a language. If it does not, then it could never present the sort of category-mistakes (verbal or otherwise) in use of a language that would count as metaphor. 'About the Appreciation of Dance', in *Philosophical Essays on Dance*, edited by Gordon Fancher and Gerald Myers (Brooklyn, NY: Dance Horizons, 1981), pp. 69–83. Ziff explains that dance '... lacks the appropriate syntactic and semantic structures requisite for a language', although it is adequate for a 'symbolic system', p. 70. In the discussion which followed presentation of this paper, philosopher Noël Carroll agreed with Ziff's rejection of dance as a language, p. 83. But he also argues that our ability to understand expressiveness in dance (by which he seems to intend some aspect of 'meaning') depends on our reasoning and categorization of aspects of a performance. This implicitly seems to require verbal categorization, which would be contrary to the position of Whittock's examined here.

³³ Kittay notes that some writers have tried 'to break down the distinction between literal and metaphorical language', op. cit., p. 20. She does not refer to Whittock's work, but cites George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, both of whom are cited by Whittock in the essay under discussion here, 'Role of Metaphor', op. cit., p. 249, n. 6. She notes that they ultimately do make a distinction that sounds suspiciously like that between literal and metaphorical. She insists (and I would agree) that 'if we deny the literal in language, we deny the possibility of metaphor as well', Kittay, op. cit., p. 20. See also, p. 50, n. 9, p. 89, n. 36.

³⁴ Whittock, 'Role of Metaphor', op. cit., p. 247.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 248.

³⁶ Goodman, op. cit., p. 64.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 65.

³⁸ Sparshott, 'Some Dimensions of Dance Meaning', op. cit., p. 102.

³⁹ Sparshott gives several examples of such references: 'If an entity is represented it may be shown simply (one dances a horse) or in a situation or action (one dances a horse being tamed) ... [T]he mimesis itself may amount to impersonation or may constitute comment ...', *ibid*, p. 112.

⁴⁰ Beardale, *Encyclopedia*, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

⁴¹ Composer John Cage, Cunningham's long-time collaborator, has been quoted as

saying in a lecture: 'We are not, in these dances, saying something. We are simple-minded enough to think that if we were saying something we would use words'. Quoted in Erica Abeel, 'The New New Dance', *Dance Scope*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1965), pp. 21-26; reprinted in *The Dance Experience*, edited by Myron Howard Nadel and Constance Nadel Miller (New York: Universe Books, 1978), pp. 116-121, p. 117.

BOOK REVIEWS

Museums of the Mind: Magritte's Labyrinth and Other Essays in the Arts. By ELLEN HANDLER SPITZ. Yale U.P. 1994. pp. 190. £19.95.

ACCORDING TO the author the purpose of this book is to ask 'whether and how psychoanalysis might whisper to us in our private moments with works of art'. The answer the book gives to the first question is a resounding 'yes', the answer to the second is 'in the usual way': through using the work as evidence of the state of the artist's psyche, through psychoanalysing fictional characters, or through conjecturing the possible psychological effects the work has on a specific group.

In the first third of the book, which is devoted to Magritte, it is in the first of these ways that psychoanalysis 'whispers'. Spitz almost immediately locates the key to Magritte in the early death, and the circumstances surrounding the death, of the artist's mother. Magritte's entire oeuvre, at least as she deals with it here, is the sign of his 'lifelong struggle with this loss'. For those not psychoanalytically inclined, then, the plunge into Freudian theory is precipitous. Fifteen pages into the account a sentence beginning, 'Among his other works devoted to the theme of oral eroticism . . .', is, in the general context, unremarkable. So it is that, while the account is in many ways evocative, subtle, and suggestive, I found myself regretting that the author's own expressed worries about its being too personal were not more justified. Finding almost no common ground, aside from admiration, between the author's feelings about Magritte and my own, it was distracting to be addressed with the first person plural.

The second and larger part of the book is made up of a series of mostly short essays. These are, as they appear to be, occasional pieces; all, with the exception of the pieces on Hopkins, and Chekhov, previously either pub-

lished, or presented as conference papers. The first of these pieces—'Musings on the Absurd'—is loosely connected to the preceding analysis of Magritte in that it aims to restate Nagel's philosophical views on absurdity as an essential human characteristic in psychoanalytical terms. Spitz's thesis, though there is scarcely space to develop it, is that the psychoanalytical process, contrary to first appearances, actually expands the patient's capacity for experiencing and tolerating absurdity. The next essay, a psychoanalysis of the two principal characters in Chekhov's *Bear*, is also, though more loosely, linked to the theme of absurdity insofar as the author finds that her encounter with the play, and particularly its climactic kiss, leaves her 'struggling with a dangerous wish to stop explaining'. Indeed, it is a running theme throughout the second part of the book that, while it is 'our' tendency as critics, scholars, or analysts, to 'objectify the entities under our scrutiny', it is in fact the power of these entities to move us that gives them a claim upon our attention. She will refer glancingly to this same contrast on several later occasions, though nowhere expands on it to the degree that this reader would have welcomed. (Especially since, as I have indicated above, the psychoanalytical context of her writing it apt to bring the question of reductionism to the fore.) The succeeding essay, for example, on the cartoon strip 'Calvin and Hobbes', though deliberately given in 'disjunctive takes', assumes an unproblematic analytical method, that allows the writer to be unreservedly approving of the cartoon's illustration of various psychoanalytical truths, and of its 'trenchant social criticism'. Likewise with her treatment of the film *Dead Poets Society*. Although she at first characterizes the film as a 'straightforward Hollywood picture . . . compelling and manipulating us with near-transparent contrivance',

nevertheless her analysis of the implicit conflicts in the film somehow manages to make it sound what she obviously does not feel it to be, that is, fascinating.

In revisiting Pirrig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, the personal note is more clearly sounded, though the greater part of the essay is devoted to an analysis of the relationship between father and son, in terms of a model derived from Winnicott. The note is sounded yet more clearly, in illustration of the general point that art can grow with us, in the essay dealing with her own changing responses to *Antigone*. Here Spitz is mainly concerned with giving that justice to the character of Creon which she feels her previous exclusive identification with Antigone prevented her from giving. By contrast the essay on Hopkin's sonnet 'Thou art indeed just, Lord' is a conventional performance of New Criticism, and, as the author writes, hardly psychoanalytical at all (unless there is an ironical intention in the 'winnowed' of the essay title). The final essay, too, offers an example of 'the power of art to shape the mind', in its account of the effect of the performance of the children's opera *Brundibar* on the inmates of the concentration camp at Terenin.

The penultimate chapter, on aesthetics for children, which might have drawn together some of these themes, is, however, the least satisfactory in the book. It is an account of two experimental programmes, undertaken with children at an elementary school in New York, together with a summary of what Spitz felt she learned from the experience: firstly, that 'the goal of aesthetic education in children' should be 'nurturing of curiosity, wonder, and an ongoing impetus to become more alive to one's own perceptions' rather than 'the transmitting of any preordained content'. (The former was, however, also the avowed aim of the experiment.) Secondly, that a 'quantum of chaos' is probably unavoidable. One interesting point that did emerge but which she does not directly comment on is that, given their own head, the children involved in the experiment rapidly turned the subject of the classes from art to history!

Spitz herself says that the book is written 'associatively rather than argumentatively', and

that the chapters may be read in any order. They do not appear to be linked by a common theoretical thread, above the application of psychoanalysis to art, and the result is, as might be expected, very much like an academic journal with a single contributor.

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Aristotle's RHETORIC: Philosophical Essays.

Edited by DAVID J. FURLEY and ALEXANDER NEHAMAS. Princeton U.P. 1994. pp. 322. £37.50.

FROM ITS inception in the mid-fifties the Symposium Aristotelicum, a gathering of the foremost Aristotelian scholars of the day, has met regularly to discuss either specific issues in Aristotelian studies or individual treatises in the corpus. So far a volume of proceedings has followed each meeting. The above collection, which gathers all the papers presented at the XIIth symposium, the topic of which was the *Rhetoric*, should be of interest to aestheticians. Not only is Book III of Aristotle's treatise a classic of aesthetics but two contributions to the present volume are directly focused on the relationship between rhetoric and the literary art. The other presentations deal with well-known problems generated by that treatise, i.e. the nature and tenor of Aristotle's defence of rhetoric against various Platonic attacks (is rhetoric a *techné*? is it morally defensible?), the logic of enthymemes, as well as some of the ethical and political dimensions of the Aristotelian rhetor's specific activities. While all the papers are of high exegetical calibre, they do not all manifest—or generate—the same level of intellectual excitement as earlier collections on the *Eudemian Ethics* and the *Politics*. Clearly, in spite of the renewal of scholarly interest of which it is currently the object, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* remains of comparatively lesser philosophical resonance.

Before turning to the contributions which are likely to be of direct interest to readers of this journal I should like to call to their attention two contributions which they might otherwise miss on the grounds that their theme is remote from matters aesthetic. Miles Burnyeat's 'Enthymeme Aristotle on the Logic of

Persuasion' is a dazzling display of philological and exegetical dexterity brought to bear on the tangled history of the definition(s) of this mode of rhetorical reasoning. As for Mary Margaret McCabe's 'Arguments in Context. Aristotle's Defense of Rhetoric' it provides both a genuine introduction to, and a sophisticated interpretation of, Aristotle's contributions to ancient debates on rhetoric. As such, it ought to be prescribed reading for all students of these and related matters.

Alexander Nehamas' iconoclastic 'Pity and Fear in the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*' aims at unsettling long-standing as well as recent interpretations of the famous definition of tragedy in *Poetics* 1449b24-28. To this effect he mounts a complex and many-sided argument to drive a wedge between, on the one hand, the extensive treatment of the emotions of pity and fear in *Rhetoric* II (which are consonant with the better known corresponding passages in both *Ethics*) and, on the other, the cryptic allusions to these emotions in the *Poetics*. More specifically, Nehamas argues that Aristotle's well adumbrated concept of emotion as cognitively loaded and thus amenable to rational persuasion, invalidates the currently favoured interpretation of *katharsis* as a directly homoeopathic educative process. Fearing for, and pitying a tragic character does not, of itself, he argues, suffice to refine our experience of, and response to, the variegated occasions for pity and fear in our daily life. Since the alternative construals of *katharsis* as allopathic purgation and purification cannot be upheld, he continues, the question arises as to how we should understand Aristotle's famous claim that tragedy 'δι' ελεου και φοβου περαινουσα την τον τοιοντον pathēmatōn katharsin'. Rejecting the traditional rendering 'trough pity and fear [tragedy] effects the *katharsis* of such emotions', he contends that, in this context, *pathēmata* refers to the incidents of the drama rather than to the emotions they generate in the audience. On this interpretation, *katharsis* would consist in the clarification of 'the pitiful and fearful incidents of the drama itself' (p. 279) rather than of the emotions themselves. This, in turn, would subvert the commonly held belief that Aristotle's definition of tragedy is a response to Plato's attack on expressive art. But is Nehamas' exegesis as

convincing as it is daring? Does he need to jettison so much exegetical baggage in bringing the *Rhetoric's* treatment of emotion to bear on the definition of *katharsis*? Could it not be argued that in involving us, directly but imaginatively, in such unusually fearful and pitiful events as take place in tragedy, this genre leads us to explore, and confront, dimensions of fear for which life experience and early training had mostly left us unprepared? Even virtuous spectators, i.e. those whose emotions are in harmony with reason, would, in the process, stand to gain deeper inner pacification.

The very title of André Laks' contribution, i.e. 'Substitution et Connaissance: Une Interprétation Unitaire (ou Presque) de la Théorie Aristotélicienne de la Métaphore', testifies to the degree of meticulousness of his study of the putative Aristotelian roots of two rival theories of metaphor. Classically defined as a stylistic ornament (a trope or 'turn of phrase'), the metaphor has also, more recently, been invested with a cognitive dimension. In his famous *La Métaphore Vive* (1975) Paul Ricoeur traces both theories to the text of the *Poetics* in which he thus detects a tension. Laks' present contribution aims at making such deconstruction redundant by showing that, in the *Rhetoric* at least, Aristotle grounds the cognitive power of metaphors in their stylistic, substitutory, role. Indeed, far from it being the case that all metaphors presuppose antecedently perceived and named similarities, some (i.e. those which take the form a:b = c:x) actually succeed in naming what had so far been ineffable (i.e. x) and, in so doing, extend our knowledge of the world. However, since rhetorical discourse is practical rather than theoretical, its metaphors will not, as a rule, be robustly cognitive. In Laks' phrase, speech-writers, i.e. non-specialists by definition, can only produce an 'effect of cognition' in their audience through the innovative conflation of particulars under a common genus. As the enthymeme is to the traditional syllogism so is the rhetorical metaphor to the full-blown cognitive metaphor.

The whole volume, carefully edited and handsomely produced, would constitute a useful addition to any library's holdings in ancient philosophy. Although transliterations and translations are provided, Greekless

readers will be at a slight disadvantage. Frenchless readers will be unable to benefit from three of the eleven contributions. This is an crude—and cosmopolitan—book

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Narrative and Freedom: The Shadows of Time. By GARY SAUL MORSON. Yale U.P. 1994. pp. 331.

£22.50

'IN WHAT SPACE', wrote Saint Augustine, 'do we measure passing time?' Gary Saul Morson, who quotes Augustine above, has a clear answer to this question; narrative space, the space of the novel. Morson recognizes that every novel, every literary work of art in general, is also a metaphysics, in so far as every metaphysics is obliged to state its relationship with temporality. Clearly inspired by Bakhtin who, as Morson points out, was concerned with ethics alongside his more formalist analyses, Morson writes that '[f]inely wrought pictures of time are to be found in certain types of literature—not so much in their explicit assertions as in the way they represent human action' (p. 87). It is these 'finely wrought pictures' that are crucial, for this is the key metaphor to understanding the explication of time, philosophical or otherwise. Morson is aware of time's metaphorical exposition in the visually-based terms of spatiality. Such metaphors may be 'both helpful and misleading' (p. 48), but it is as well to know that they are there, to recognize the commerce between time and metaphor which undoubtedly supports much philosophical discourse on temporality. Literature has a stronger claim to arrive at valid philosophical determinations of time if it can be shown that philosophy has employed literary and rhetorical devices in its narrative and this, of course, is part of Derrida's point about the redundancy of much disciplinary sectarianism.

The philosophical and now the scientific treatment of time shares with the literary treatment a preoccupation with the classical conundrum of freedom and determinism. This was once a primarily theological problem, exemplified by the disagreement between Luther and Erasmus, but as atheism and agnosticism gained philosophical ground in the nineteenth

century, it is fitting that the dominant secular art form of the novel should take up the question. To show (and the difference between showing and telling is an issue here) how the picture-puzzle of human freedom functions in the novel as chronotopic, Morson uses a simple model adapted from Bakhtin. Foreshadowing is protentional within the literary timestream, it 'establishes the merely illusory nature of what the character experiences as open temporality' (p. 47). Oedipus sets out on the road and his future beckons unknown to him. Backshadowing is retentional, and Morson also adapts his frame of reference here to include social historicization and evolutionary biology as well as the revisionist collage made of the past by the ideological excesses of Soviet Communism. A chronocentric bias tends to view the past as merely preparation for the present, and it is easy to see how Soviet political revisionism is empowered by this particular chronotope. If your model is revolution, then you must make your past explain your present and your present control your future, which is as much as to restate Orwell's dictum that whoever controls the past controls the future and whoever controls the present controls the past.

Morson's addition to the Bakhtin model is sideshadowing, the parallel universes (to borrow from the populist scientific argot) which accompany each narrative in *potentia*. Borges' story *The Garden of Forking Paths* is an extraordinary example of this model, and it is read knowingly by Morson. However, the two examples of temporal sideshadowing which exemplify the narrative possibilities of the open structure for Morson are Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. Morson's expertise in the field of Russian literature make these two writers ideal candidates. Tolstoy's representation of the contingency of historical events within even as historically comfortable a narrative as that which forms *War and Peace* is one of many intriguing new aspects of that writer opened up here. Dostoevsky's temporal occultations include the great (in)determinist text, *Notes from Underground*, although one of the most entertaining aspects of Dostoevsky's longer novels is also expertly isolated by Morson. Dostoevsky's narrators never have enough information, or they have too much. They hear conflicting

opinions, outright contradictions, lies, rumours, each of which opens up new temporal possibilities for the novel, new motives, new kinks in the graph line of the narrative. *Tristram Shandy*, which is traditionally a very popular translation in the former Soviet Union, is perhaps (with Joyce and Proust) one of the greatest novelistic representations of time and, although mentioned familiarly here, is wisely left alone on this occasion by Morson. It undoubtedly merits entire books in itself. Doubtless many novels and plays have a valid claim to be philosophy about time. Perhaps every reader really is working their way towards *Finnegan's Wake*, perhaps that is what pure novelistic time 'looks like'.

It is important that books like this make the points that they do which, here, is a point about the disciplinary right to participate in the forum of philosophical or quasi-scientific analysis and definition. Stephen Hawking's populist crammer on time made no mention of Kant, of Bergson, of Husserl, seeing science as the only discipline fit to make pronouncements of any contemporary value. But not only is philosophy at the negotiating table, but literature also which, to borrow one of Gary Morson's innovative devices, sidestadows philosophy as much as *vice versa*.

MARK GULLICK

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Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art. By HERBERT SUSSMAN. Cambridge U.P. 1995. pp. 227 £30.

THIS BOOK deals with the need supposedly felt by early Victorian writers and artists to 'refashion the notion of manliness and artistic manhood in a world transformed by industrialization and embourgeoisement' and with the way in which the attempt to construct a 'new form of manhood' for the industrial age was dissolved by the 'emergence of a gay or homosexual discourse' in the early writings of Walter Pater. Sussman's study reflects current interests in the construction of gender and admits its debts to the fashionable theories of Foucault. *Victorian Masculinities* is able, scholarly, energetically written and adroit in the use of its

chosen conceptual framework and terminologies. Partly because of the limitations of that framework, the book is also narrow in its field of reference and sometimes perverse and eccentric in the reading of texts.

Some of the problem derives from the Foucauldian scheme of sudden, fairly drastic historical breaks in which, it is asserted, new cultural, intellectual, emotional and sexual configurations emerge and from Foucault's belief, clearly adopted by Sussman, that history is always written from the perspective of the present. Foucault's historical hypotheses and paradigms have been challenged by J. G. Merquor and others, and are probably rated by professional historians as on about the same level as the schemes of Oswald Spengler or Arnold Toynbee. In any case, for Sussman these historical hypotheses are a disabling incubus. Repeatedly in his book, one has the sense of a lively and industrious mind pressing the evidence to fit the thesis. For example, the assertions that male readers of *Past and Present* responded to the 'male fantasies articulated by Carlyle' and found his 'words resonating with their anxieties about male identity' is based on a *Blackwoods* reviewer's remark that the book 'appeals to the individual heart' and 'to the consciousness of each man, and to the high and eternal laws of justice and charity—lo, ye are brethren!' It is difficult to see how these conventional Christian expressions can bear the construction the critic seeks to put upon them. Again Carlyle's use of the name 'Judith' in his account of the march of the women to Versailles, 'the biblical type of the castrating female' is taken as evidence of an 'almost obsessive attraction/repulsion to fantasies of women acting out the destructive eruption of a projected male energy'. The apocryphal Judith like the canonical Deborah, was not a 'castrating female' but, in traditional religious typology and iconography, an image of heroism striking down oppression. It is interesting to look at the passage in *The French Revolution* from which Sussman is quoting. Carlyle begins by asserting the 'sincerity' and 'Reality' of mob violence, a 'Complex of human Forces and individualities' compared with the 'wearisome' artificiality of modern battles. Describing the mounting resentment of the women of

Paris who 'hear children weeping for bread', he three times characterizes them as 'Maternity' then moves from 'mothers' to 'Judiths' (a name quoted from the contemporary journalist Camille Desmoulins), next to the faintly ridiculous 'ten thousand Judiths', finally to 'Menads'. What Carlyle is giving is a multifaceted picture of a 'ludicro-terrific', constantly changing reality. Sussman drains Carlyle's prose of its creative energy and denies its constant playing with tones and perspectives in order to sustain a restrictive, tendentious preoccupation. Elsewhere, Carlyle's use of dramatized speakers and his dissolution of a 'controlled prose' are seen not as the means of grasping a complex truth or as a conscious aesthetic effect but as a means of protecting Carlyle's own fragile sexual identity.

Perhaps this book's most obvious limitation is an almost complete lack of reference to Victorian and pre-Victorian religion. Surely Carlyle's Calvinist or Browning's Nonconformist background are relevant to their views of duty, sexual restraint or brotherhood? If they are not then this should be demonstrated. How can one talk of attitudes to celibacy in the 1830s and 1840s without exploring the context of the Oxford Movement and the Tractarians as religious movements in a culture deeply involved with religious issues? To see celibacy and the controversies it aroused in Protestant England solely in the context of regulating male sexuality and without considering its ostensible purpose of religious dedication is a minor but odd example of the Foucauldian habit of interpreting past cultures solely in the light of recent issues. Such an approach may claim 'relevance'. It may make the past serve some modish political or sexual agenda. It can never give us that refreshing shock of discovering the otherness of another culture or literature and being challenged by them.

Victorian Masculinities demonstrates its allegiances to currently approved interests and turns of phrase. We meet our new (or not-so-new) friends 'binary opposition', 'historic specificity' (the name if not the thing), 'the Other', 'the return of the repressed', 'hegemonic masculinity'. Far more valuable than these or than the book's shaky thesis, are those flickerings of wit and intellectual vitality which, in spite of his

best efforts, the author is unable to suppress. He will undoubtedly write a far better book when he frees himself from the shackles of fashionable theory.

JOHN COATES

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Poetry, Space, Landscape Towards A New Theory. By CHRIS RITTER. Cambridge U.P. 1995 pp. 322. £37.50.

IN PART the new theory structuring this book has a long lineage. One strand is at least as old as Marxism: cultural consciousness 'is a field of political and economic determination.' To Auden's question,

Am I

To see in the Lake District, then,
Another bourgeois invention like the piano?

Chris Ritter clearly believes the answer is yes. A second strand of theory is as old as scholarship itself. It presumes a topic is best dealt with by citing learned authorities, putting what they say in a slightly different perspective, and providing one's own illustrations and interpretations.

What is new is adumbrated in the first chapter. There Ritter rejects the 'habitat theory' of landscape proposed by J. Appleton and the archetypal interpretation put forward by Mircea Eliade as being 'essentialist', dehistoricizing and depoliticizing. The history and the politics Ritter aims to put back by showing how and why different periods read and depict landscapes quite differently. Full historical relativism (which would mean one generation could not comprehend the culture of an earlier) is avoided by affirming, but not giving adequate rationale for, some transhistorical principles. One such principle is economic determination, mentioned above. It is complemented by what Ritter initially designates as four matrices of perception. How man scans nature depends on (i) 'Ecological' perception which looks at what governs human subsistence and security; (ii) 'Cosmographic' perception which reads nature in terms of current cosmological beliefs; (iii) 'analogical' perception which apprehends phenomena in terms of analogy, polarity, symbol and type; and (iv)

'technoptic' perception which regards nature with interests acquired from art itself

Further principles of discrimination are employed as well in the analysis of the evolving cultural comprehension of landscape. Ritter proposes five historical determinants of the aesthetic taste for landscape: (i) the Managerial, whereby a landscape's potential for fertility and production is valued; (ii) the Comparative, whereby landscapes are judged in relation to others elsewhere; (iii) the Quotidian, which evinces interest in what is ordinary and close to people; (iv) the Possessive, which is concerned with property interests; and (v) the Rational, which is related to a viewing of the processes of nature in relation to the scientific beliefs of the period. Ritter also draws a distinction between landscape and *landscape*: in the latter there is pictorial organization involving distances and perspective, whereby point of view, spatial relationships, colours and optical effects create a 'prospect'. Ritter considers that while all the five historical determinants are involved in the production of landscape, a taste for it only arises in 'a triumphantly expressionist society, whose artistic patrons are gratified by "comparative" and "possessive" space'.

The book begins with 'hunter-gatherer' societies, passes through the periods of Egyptian, Graeco-Roman, late antiquity and the Church Fathers, Medieval into Renaissance, and culminates in a study of seventeenth-century poetry. The graphic and verbal arts, along with the accompanying economic and agricultural substrata, are discussed, though poetry is given more attention than painting. The sweep is huge, the erudition immense, and the writing—though occasionally pretentious—is vivid, muscular and varied. Of its type, this book is outstanding. Because it is so good, perhaps something should be said regarding the limitations brought about by the type itself.

In the sciences, theory means the formation of hypotheses, and these are subject to falsifiability. The principles adumbrated by Ritter are not hypotheses in this sense, for no attempt is made to test them by looking for evidence that would confound them. If landscapes are to be regarded as cultural constructs, no less so are any notions of economic factors adduced as explanatory. Further, concepts applied to cultural phe-

nomena, unlike scientific concepts applied to physical phenomena, may radically transform the nature of the phenomena themselves. Hence cultural theories themselves often constitute or part-create what they appear to be analysing. Again, where human activities are at issue, value judgements are inescapable. All too often, however, for these evaluations no explicit justification is provided. (Ritter's high regard for landscape over landscape, and his general preference for 'empirical' observations of nature over symbolic presentations, are cases in point.)

Given the scope of material covered by a book such as this, selection is inevitable and is in the main determined by the theory itself. So theory employed here is best understood not as involving verifiable or disprovable hypotheses, but as projected categories that help structure and give assimilable patterns to a huge mass of amorphous material. The test then is not whether the theories are right or wrong, but the degree to which they can provide vantage points for over-viewing a mass of material while respecting the incorrigibility of individual cases.

Ritter's book calls attention to innumerable specific examples, all in themselves interesting, and his theories are intermittently Procrustean. The last chapter on seventeenth-century English poetry, in some ways the culmination of the book, particularly reveals the conflict between overarching theory and specific datum. Much of the poetry is steamrollered under considerations of material determinism. The religious dimension particularly suffers, Vaughan becoming 'an undiscovered poet of military occupation', and Traherne being condemned for his 'quietistic, compensatory aesthetics'. Ritter writes: 'Had Traherne's perspectives prevailed, a kind of nature-mysticism would have been the opium of the masses'. This is witty but reductive. On the other hand, there is a very fine and provocative analysis of the maverick qualities of Marvell's poetry: this in itself warrants reading Ritter's fascinating book.

TREVOR WHITTOCK

Living Poetically: Kierkegaard's Existential Aesthetics. By SYLVIA WALSH. Penn State Press, Pennsylvania. 1995. pp. 294. £35.50.

This is an impressive piece of scholarship, careful to take into account the full range of Kierke-

gaard's authorship in an attempt to reassess the importance of the aesthetic or 'poetic' in his thought. That the main purpose of Kierkegaard's aesthetics should be *existential* will come as no surprise. However, against the standard picture painted of Kierkegaard, as a believer in the 'aesthetic' as the lowest of the 'stages on life's way', inferior to 'ethical' and 'religious' modes of living, Walsh argues for a more complex view: that Kierkegaard has 'an ethical-religious conception of the poetic in which the aesthetic, ethical, and religious dimensions of human life are envisaged as integrated rather than autonomous and antithetical to one another' (p. 3).

She attempts to demonstrate this through a lengthy and detailed reading of Kierkegaard's massive output. One of the book's strengths is the close attention paid to lesser-known works such as *From the Papers of One Still Living* (the early critique of Hans Christian Andersen) and the later 'specifically religious writings' (p. 223), as well as more commonly discussed texts. Walsh divides the work into three 'stages', itself a highly Kierkegaardian move. The first (up to 1844) contains such texts as *The Concept of Irony* and *Either/Or*, up to and including *Philosophical Fragments* and *The Concept of Anxiety*. A second, middle period (1845-1848), in which 'negative remarks about poetry ... are especially prominent' (p. 167), includes *Stages on Life's Way* and the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*; while the third, final period (1849-1852) covers 'specifically religious' works such as *The Sickness Unto Death* and *Practice in Christianity*.

In the earliest stage, Walsh argues, Kierkegaard first speaks of 'living poetically' in relation to the German romantic poets, whom he attacks for their tendency to pay insufficient attention to concrete 'actuality'. As early as this, Kierkegaard can be distinguished from other thinkers who might be thought to urge 'living poetically/aesthetically', such as Nietzsche, by the fact that for the Dane 'living poetically' is not about *creating*, but *developing*, a self in accordance with a given nature. Such a way of living is possible, in Kierkegaard's view, only for the religious individual, who 'possesses an inward infinity by virtue of his or her relation to the eternal as a possibility within'

(p. 59). Thus 'imagination must not cut itself loose from actuality but should serve as a medium through which a transformation and development of our given actuality within a religious orientation can take place' (p. 62). This theme of *The Concept of Irony* is continued into *Either/Or*, the essays of volume one thereof further demonstrating the inadequacies of romanticism; and volume two suggesting 'higher'—ethical and religious—possibilities for poetic living. But in the final texts of the first stage—*Repetition, Fear and Trembling*, the *Fragments* and *The Concept of Anxiety*—one wonders whether Walsh is not pushing her interpretative luck. She stresses the importance for Kierkegaard of learning to 'dance lightly in the sphere of the religious', but one might question whether the fact that Kierkegaard's pseudonyms use 'the image of the dance and other poetic as well as aesthetic features' (p. 164) is sufficient to conclude that these texts advance a view of the religious that is 'fundamentally poetic' (p. 129).

In the second phase, Kierkegaard's *objections* to 'poetry' become more prevalent. Despite these—usefully summarized in chapter 6—Walsh argues that Kierkegaard nevertheless continues to recognize an important existential role for the poetic. She also pursues an interesting distinction between 'true' and 'fake' authors. The former, for Kierkegaard, is one who has an overall 'life-view' through which he views himself and the world; the latter merely directs himself to a series of problems which he has not properly thought through to reach a 'conclusion'. The thought that occurs here, though, and which is not really dealt with by Walsh, is how Kierkegaard's own authorship would fare under such a criterion of judgement. What is the status of the many different perspectives of his various pseudonyms? True, in *The Point of View* he claims always to have had an expressly religious purpose; but later on, he is rather more circumspect, describing his authorship as 'gradually progressing' (p. 241).

In the third stage, Kierkegaard increasingly comes to see himself as a 'poet of the religious'; more specifically, of Christianity. Exploring ideas such as the role of imagination in the constitution and development of the self, Walsh goes on to argue that Kierkegaard viewed his

later religious writings themselves as a kind of poetry, but without ever forgetting the primary importance of realising their themes existentially.

One of the book's most thought-provoking features comes in an 'Epilogue', in which Walsh brings a Kierkegaardian perspective to bear upon aspects of postmodernism, particularly 'postmodern French feminist' (p. 251) thinkers of 'difference'. One central thrust of Walsh's case is to use Kierkegaard to question whether gender difference can ever provide an adequate sense of self-identity, urging us to stress—with Kierkegaard—not *difference*, but rather the *commonality* of our humanity. This is an interesting and provocative chapter. One might balk at her tendency to conflate postmodernism and deconstruction (while 'not synonymous', she tells us, they—along with post-structuralism—can be treated 'as a single phenomenon' (p. 245)). Nevertheless, the idea that many of Kierkegaard's objections to romantic irony apply just as forcefully to aspects of postmodernism is an important one.

I restrict myself to a couple of additional objections. Firstly, throughout the book, some confusion is generated by a lack of clarity as to how the terms 'aesthetic' and 'poetic' are being used. Sometimes, Walsh seems to be using them interchangeably; but at others, she talks, for instance, of Kierkegaard's recognition of 'a legitimate role of the poetic in both existential and aesthetic contexts' (p. 192).

Secondly, whilst one cannot dispute C. Stephen Evans' claim, on the inner sleeve, that Walsh has 'an absolute mastery of the Kierkegaardian corpus and a truly impressive command of the secondary literature', I cannot endorse his sentiments that she 'wears this learning lightly'. My response to Walsh's apparent determination, via lengthy footnotes, to leave the reader in no doubt as to the sheer amount that she had read, varied between admiration and irritation. Some of these footnotes could usefully have been 'promoted' to the main body of the text (this is especially true of the comments on postmodernism and its cousins in the 'Epilogue'), but sometimes they just got in the way, disturbing the 'flow'.

However, despite these reservations, this is a worthy and useful book. To anyone who

wanted an account of some of the main themes in Kierkegaard's books, offered on a text by text basis, rather than through the dubious means of an overall summary of his thought, this volume could be highly recommended. Perhaps the book's main achievements are two-fold. Firstly, it encourages the payment of closer attention to the role of the aesthetic in Kierkegaard, and secondly, demonstrates beyond doubt that any attempt to draw rigid boundaries between the 'stages', whereby 'aesthetic', 'ethical' and 'religious' modes of living are sealed off from each other, is seriously to distort Kierkegaard's thought.

JOHN LIPFITT

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The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy. By GILLES LIPOVETSKY. Translated by Catherine Porter, Foreword by Richard Sennett. Princeton U.P., New French Thought Series 1994. pp. 276. No price given.

GILLES LIPOVETSKY launches his book with the following statement: 'The question of fashion is not a fashionable one among intellectuals' (p. 3). In spite of fashion's inescapability in late twentieth-century life it is rarely viewed dispassionately by the intellectuals, and Lipovetsky attempts to redress the balance in *The Empire of Fashion* by elevating its historical place among social phenomena and seeks 'to show that . . . modern cultural meanings and values that elevate newness and expression of human individuality to positions of dignity . . .' (p. 5) have played a vital role in the formation of Western democratic process, implying that we disregard these factors in the shaping of modern democratic society to our detriment.

Going so far as to claim that 'Fashion is no longer an aesthetic embellishment . . . an accessory to collective life, it is the key to the entire edifice . . .' (p. 6), Lipovetsky sets out his purpose in two ways. In Part One 'The Enchantment of Appearances' he provides the reader with a detailed historical survey of the phenomenon, citing its origins in the Middle Ages, right through to the development of what he terms 'open fashion', the ready availability of new goods and forms that came to dominate and shape popular culture in the mid-

nineteenth-century onwards. In Part Two, a detailed and specific account of fashion's effect on life in this century is given, appropriating for discussion the dynamics of advertising, media style and the *an constant* anxiety, control of information.

Part One is densely yet engagingly written, Lipovetsky setting out to prove that the origin of fashion is not universal, rather it springs from a distinctly western social dynamic: class. Previous clarifications of fashion, Lipovetsky says, are inadequate: they account neither for fashion's 'logic of inconstancy', (perpetual self-renewal) nor its aesthetic mutations. The key to the former lies in personal appearance as the prime motivation in the fashion dynamic: constant re-invention of oneself and appearance. A fourteenth-century middle class merchant, for example, might imitate the nobility in order to gain distinction. This in turn forces the upper classes to innovate to maintain their distinctive place in society, thus accounting for fashion's inherent mutability of appearance. With the consolidation of capitalist society, the cyclical process of fashion speeds up: novelty begins to anticipate innovation, and the entire process quickens, prompting the 'exaltation of the modern' which is, according to Lipovetsky, one of the 'Classical' ways of thinking about fashion as a societal force. Lipovetsky finds fault with this view, however, because it sees fashion as an outwardly imposed constraint, symbolizing and perpetuating social stratification, when in light of its history, fashion has always been a matter of individual choice. He exonerates class tension *vis-à-vis* the 'catch-up' phenomenon, and lays the cause entirely at the feet of the aristocracy: since they are (supposedly) free of class anxiety. Looking at transformations within the highest orders of the social elite, therefore, gives us more insight into the causes of fashion's fast-moving mutability and power. Citing Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class*, Lipovetsky explains fashion's occasional absurdities via the law of unproductive expense. The rise of fashion happened in the Middle Ages because of the growth of individualist values, which brings in the second overnight of 'Classical' theoretical writings on fashion: aesthetic embellishment: '... fashion is defined .. by the aspirations of refinement,

elegance, beauty, no matter what extravagances, excesses and lapses in taste have managed, from time to time, over centuries, to gain sway ...' (pp. 44-45). The rise of individuality as a social value is often cited as one of the main factors in the decline of the Middle Ages, and this is attributed, in the section entitled 'Beyond class rivalries', to mankind's desire for personal distinction through personal choice in and beauty of appearance, making fashion's fast dynamic inevitable, resulting in the present coming to be seen as more prestigious than the past.

By the end of Part One, which brings the reader to the start of this century, we can see Lipovetsky's essential logic begin to emerge: the elevation of fashion and discussion thereof to the arena of social philosophy. Having set out to prove (which he does exhaustively) that fashion is essential to the formation of individualist thinking, one begins to see fashion as the harbinger of individualism, a social dynamic whose importance it is nearly impossible to dismiss '... because it can permeate the very reference points of personal appearance ..' (p. 128). Because Lipovetsky sets out to view fashion as a positive thing, this view of individualism is automatically persuasive: no one who is an intellectual product of Western democratic society will want to deny the value of individual self-determination in this context, because it is a value inherent to the intellectual.

In Part Two, Lipovetsky adopts the foregoing history as the precedent for what he terms 'consummate fashion', the intrusion of fashion's 'catch-up' dynamic and desire for aesthetic individualism into every sphere of human existence. Marginal differentiation, seduction and ephemerality, the three factors in Lipovetsky's advocacy of fashion's implementation as part of the collective social process, are developed as a means for society to re-evaluate its attachment to ideals, and perhaps evolve an even purer form of democracy by taking some cues from them. Lipovetsky takes a pause from his stalwart exaltation of fashion at this point, clearly stating in the introduction to Part Two that the euphoria of fashion is not everywhere at all times: not everything is defined by the fashion dynamic, rather the autonomy of the intellectual disciplines are

sometimes restructured by the fashion dynamic. Looking at theories of fashion that predominated in the 1960s with the general belief put forward by Packard, Boonstin and Baudrillard, among others, that fashion is a sinister matter of planned obsolescence, Lipovetsky dismisses these because of their revolutionary overtones, stating that those who denigrated fashion at this point were unaware that '... the radical-subversive perspective was itself becoming a fad in use among intellectuals ...' (p. 133). To see fashion as a fetishization of change that will ultimately lead back to class-dominated society and to ignore its self-renewing aspect is, for Lipovetsky, too politicized. Instead, the '... centuries-old struggle to conquer individual autonomy is under way ...' (ibid.)

The undeniable accelerated pace of product change, an abundance of choice in all manner of products enables Lipovetsky to apply fashion's working dynamic (obsolescence, seduction and diversification as introduced to society via the creation of *haute couture*) to all forms of collective life. Even economic logic is seen to have taken on fashion's form: minor and subtle changes to any and all products, give the edge in global competition, and thus the individual, faced with so many options, is now truly making his own choice. At times extremely convoluted (perhaps some of the Gallic wit has been lost in translation) *The Empire of Fashion* nevertheless provides an illuminating means to approach, ponder and strenuously address the idea of fashion, that may eventually become *de rigueur* because of the novel level of its enquiry.

LOURA W. BROOKS

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The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art, 1909-1923 By JOHANNA DRUCKER. Chicago U.P. 1994. pp. 298 £27.95

PATTERN POETRY is very ancient, and predates by many centuries the use of typographical experiments in late nineteenth- and twentieth-century verse. In pattern poetry, the written or printed shape of the text corresponds to its theme or subject: for instance, a funeral ode

might be printed in the shape of a funerary urn. It exploits the visual appearance of the text to reflect and confirm its verbal content. An example with which everyone is familiar is the mouse's tale in *Alice in Wonderland*. Nowadays it is thought of as rather trivial, but some are to be found in the *Greek Anthology*, and it was a form used with great distinction by Rabanus Maurus in Carolingian times.

Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*, published in 1897, used different type-faces to indicate the importance and relation of its motifs, and to suggest the rise and fall of the intonation. As in pattern poetry, this arrangement embodied a reflective relation between the visual and the verbal. In addition, though, Mallarmé used the white space on the page, the position of words on the page, and the relation of verso and recto when the book is opened, as articulatory devices. That is, he exploited the properties of the book as a physical object, not just to reflect the meaning contained therein, but to generate meaning in their own right. As he put it in his preface to the poem, 'The paper intervenes'.

This was a crucial difference between Mallarmé and pattern poetry, and made him a forerunner of the poetry studied here by Johanna Drucker. The typographically experimental poetry of the first two decades of the century was rooted, she argues, in a recognition that a sign is a material object; or, to be precise, that the materiality of the sign can be exploited to enlarge the signifying function that the sign already possesses. Saussure described the verbal signifier as a 'sound-image' (*image acoustique*). But if it is taken also as a physical sound—a sound token as well as a sound type—and also as a visual object inscribed upon a physical page, an entirely new range of signifying possibilities becomes available.

Drucker examines in detail four poets who experimented with typography in their work. Although they were representative of the *avant-garde* at the start of the century, they drew on the earlier achievements of William Morris' arts and crafts movement, and on prior developments in commercial graphics and poster design. They were not themselves typographic innovators, but they used typography as a method of innovation in poetry.

Filippo Marinetti experimented with different typefaces, repetitions, symbols, and graphic layout, in an attempt to convey an impression of rapid and violent sensations appropriate to a machine age. He wanted not just to subvert ordinary language, to free it from the restrictions of syntax, but also to subvert our normal expectations of verbal mimesis. His poems were meant to be self-subsisting material objects, which instead of signifying something were 'analogies' for things. He thought that the notion of onomatopoeia captured something of what he was trying to do. Apollinaire also wanted to move away from imitation or resemblance, to create a poetry which drew attention to its own immediate materiality rather than to an absent signified. He was in some respects similar to the pattern poets, since his *Calligrammes* (1918) contained typographical pictures of cravats, hearts, clocks, and the like. His intention, however, was not to duplicate the verbal in the visual, but to undermine normal syntax in order to produce a self-referential signifying object, each part related to the others in a perpetual circle of reciprocal reference.

Ilya Zdanevich had some affinities with the Russian Formalists, in that he wanted to emancipate poetry from ordinary language. He concentrated on the materiality of the words, and considered both its sound and its visual appearance to have signifying functions in their own right, and not as subservient to verbal meaning. Tristan Tzara was a founder of Dadaism, and editor of the journal *Dada*, and his poetry was, accordingly, radically subversive. 'Dada', he wrote, 'means nothing.' But in fact Dadaism presupposed and required the norms and systems that it undermined. Tzara mingled styles, typefaces, layouts and references, in a manner that we accept as 'normal' in a newspaper but 'subversive' in a literary work, thus abolishing the boundaries between the commercial and the literary, high art and low art, and abandoning the presumption of authorial individuality.

The impulses that gave rise to these innovative poetic styles are still with us, and experimental verse has not vanished from the earth. But sound poetry and concrete poetry are far from the mainstream, and the Futurist, Cubist and Dadaist poets examined by Johanna

Drucker lost influence quickly and irretrievably. After 1922, when the last issue of *Dada* appeared, Surrealism became the *avant-garde*, and it reacted against Dadaism by focusing on content rather than form. Later, what Drucker calls 'mid-century modernism' wanted art forms to stay pure and unadulterated, and simply ignored the blurring of edges which, for the experimental poets, had been one of their principal objectives.

Drucker's discussion of why experimental poetry fell out of favour is perhaps the weakest part of the book, somehow it is not weighty enough. My own opinion is that it can be explained partly by an important change in metaphysical fashion. Cassirer referred to it as the replacement of substance by function, and its culmination is Derrida's world of signs made up of airy difference and signifying nothing. It is characteristic of our materialist age that there is widespread discomfort with the concept of matter. Thus, a poetics based upon the materiality of the sign, which forces presence upon us with such vulgar assurance, becomes an insult to the fastidious and a scandal to the meek.

The most fascinating thing about these poets is that so many of their concerns were to resurface later in literary theory. The theory of the death of the author is clearly prefigured in Tzara. The replacement of reference by self-reference was their constant aspiration. They confronted the problematic nature of literary mimesis long before it was fashionable elsewhere. These ideas and issues, which we think of as peculiar to ourselves, did not spring from nowhere, but were prepared in the artistic ferment of the first two decades of the century, just like so much else in our present artistic culture. This book therefore, apart from its considerable intrinsic interest, explores an important and hitherto neglected part of our intellectual history.

HUGH BREDIN

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Art and the French Commune: Imagining Paris after War and Revolution. By ALBERT BOIME. Princeton U.P. 1995. pp. 234. £33.50.

FOLLOWING FRENCH defeat in the Franco-Prussian war there was a short-lived revolution

in Paris, the Commune of 1871. The group of painters who came to be known as Impressionists held their inaugural exhibition in 1874. Conservative critics regarded their work as revolutionary, and associated it with the political motives of the Commune. But did the Impressionists mount an analogous challenge to the order of French culture and society? In this book Albert Boime argues that they did not. On the contrary, he regards them as attempting to restore the order briefly threatened by the Commune. The myth of aesthetic modernism as a socially progressive force is a potent one. Boime's history challenges it at its ordinary moment.

Boime begins by identifying the Impressionists and their circle as moderate republicans, mostly unsympathetic to the objectives of the Commune, though critical of its brutal suppression. The reaction to their work as expressing a revolutionary threat was, Boime shows, partial and transient. Certainly their technique was palpably modern, but of a sort that appealed to bourgeois taste, offering no opportunity for proletarian identification. The Impressionists, says Boime, 'had to find a way of appearing modern, advanced, positivist, and yet return to pre-War cultural ideals of leisure and pleasure' (p. 45). In doing so they squared cultural conservatism with the technological and commercial thrust of the Third Republic.

Boime's charge against the Impressionists is, however, more serious than this. It is that their art is complicit in the official campaign to reconstruct the city of Paris and its social order, to conceal the traces of revolt, and to do so in a way that created the illusion that the ideals of the Commune had been realized. Boime attempts to substantiate this charge by considering the subject matter of Impressionist painting and its treatment. He lays considerable stress on the fact that they painted Parisian scenes which had been sites of conflict during the defence of the Commune, but which were now restored to the bourgeoisie. Though the Tuileries remained a burnt-out ruin in 1876, Monet's painting of the subject depicts, instead, its gardens. Monet's task, like that of the gardener, comments Boime, 'was to rake over the traces of the hated

insurgents' (p. 68). Similarly Renoir locates his *Bal du Moulin de Galette* of the same year in precisely the area that had been the centre of Communard activity, but he depicts it as a meeting place of bourgeois men and working-class women 'the liberating energies of the Commune have now been repressed into a patriarchal system and social hierarchy' (p. 116).

Renoir's picture exemplifies at once the sort of illusion of social equality that Boime believes Impressionism creates and the reality of bourgeois control of social space it celebrates. He sees the former as paradigmatically achieved through the use of elevated perspectives upon 'an anonymous crowd comprising all classes treated equally' (p. 37), the latter through the privileged and secure position such vantage points afford the bourgeois observer. Workers and women, liberated in the Commune, are brought back into social control under such a gaze. Boime notes that the regulated female sexuality expressed in Impressionist images of women contrasts sharply with their demonization as deranged incendiaries—*pétroleuses*—during the Commune. When represented otherwise, as by Degas, it is either 'by sexualising sweated labour' (p. 59) or by evoking the working-class alcoholism blamed for the *pétroleuses*, as in *L'Absinthe*.

In an epilogue on *La Grande Jatte*, Boime treats Seurat as attempting to resolve these contradictions of Impressionism under the influence of later anarchist thought. *La Grande Jatte* aims to represent social harmony on the basis of a respect for individuality and independence, for example, that of the many unchaperoned women in the picture. The scientific methodology of Seurat's painting parallels that whereby the social harmony it depicts could be attained.

Boime makes a provocative and scholarly case, but doubts as to its cogency arise. First, surely Boime underestimates the threatening effect of Impressionist painting techniques upon the 'moral order' promoted by conservatives in the Third Republic and expressed by the academic art of Salon painters. But it was just this 'moral order', sanctified by the Church, whose defiance was thought to have caused the Commune. Instead of standing solid

and unchanging, the monuments of Paris are broken up and rendered evanescent by Impressionist technique, as some were, literally, by the Communards. This was its primary effect rather than that, as Boime claims, 'Impressionist disembodiment (whether conscious or unconscious) served the purpose of occluding an uncomfortable and contradictory reality' (p. 59). (The small black and white reproductions in the book aid and abet Boime in his underrating of the 'revolution' Impressionist technique represents).

Second, and relatedly, Impressionist technique was, as much as Seurat's, 'scientific' in its reliance on the physics of light and use of new synthetic pigments. In adopting such means the Impressionists allied themselves with the emerging technical bureaucracy of the Third Republic and against the traditional structures of authority advocated by conservatives. Boime elides these crucial divisions, particularly in discussing the Impressionists' choice as subject matter of bourgeoisified ex-Commune sites. But, third, it is hard to know if the choice of such subjects will bear the weight Boime places on it, especially since, as he illustrates, the Impressionists painted in a similar way areas restored after damage in the Franco-Prussian war. Is the celebration of peace necessarily counter-revolutionary? Surely only if what it celebrates is illusory. Yet, while Boime convincingly demonstrates the contrivance of such illusions in the work of the artistically more conservative Caillebotte, he is less persuasive with respect to the mainstream Impressionists.

Finally, Boime's charge against Impressionism implies an *intention* of complicity in conservatism, but he justifies it largely by evidence concerning the art's *reception*, observing that 'the initial occluding function of Impressionist landscapes has yet to lose its vitality' (p. 139). Could one not equally characterize this reception, however, as the *appropriation* of potentially subversive art by the established order? Is it this, or Boime's more incriminating story, that characterizes the history of modernism? Boime's book is a stimulating contribution to this debate.

PAUL GILBERT

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Innovation and Tradition in Religion. By CLAIRE DISBREY. Avebury Press 1994. pp. 237. £39.50.

IN THIS interdisciplinary book Disbrey discusses recent work in both the philosophy of religion and aesthetics, and brings them to bear on the question 'How do we account for radical innovation in religion?' She discusses some already existing theories of religious change, and finding them inadequate, moves into the sphere of aesthetics to investigate whether any institutional theories of art have anything to offer the philosopher of religion. Ultimately, her goal is to lay the foundations for an institutional theory of religion.

She begins by contrasting Alisdair MacIntyre and William James—anti-experience versus religious experience where motivation for change is concerned. MacIntyre defeats James, but still fails to resolve the problem, even though he does survive an attack from Richard Swinburne. Religious concepts, by their very nature, seem to require some prior concept of divinity if they are to recognize any divine phenomenon, and so any account of innovation which depends upon objective empirical observation will encounter difficulties. Peter Winch and D. Z. Phillips are both wheeled into the debate, but Disbrey prefers to major on James and MacIntyre, adopting the case study upon which they both drew for their opposing views.

A historical study of George Fox—the Quaker innovator—is used to show that he did not replace the religious concepts of his day, in which he was well-versed, nor did he establish his own inner experiences as a criterion of value. Rather he established a new institution—the Quaker Meeting, which was as symptomatic of its political context, as any innovation (Disbrey's included) is today.

Theories of religion based on the priority of language have problems explaining radical innovation because they see religion primarily as socially-established rule-following systems of beliefs' (p. 220). This being so, Disbrey turns her attention to culture, when studies of experience and language yield no useful result. When seen as part of culture, religions become prone to the influences of changing attitudes and environment. A theory which acknowledges this is seen as being 'institutional'.

This leads Disbrey to discuss her artistic precursors, many of whom she criticizes because 'they tend to interpret 'institutions' in terms of socially-established bodies of people, rather than socially established activities' (p. 221). For her, an institution is loosely defined as a socially established, repeated and symbolic activity shared by a community. A concept is institutional if its use is regulated by institutions (such as the Church). This terminology can be confusing, and Disbrey thinks it has also confused the advocates of the Artworld.

She discusses sacred objects, and how they come to be so—they have been set apart, because they are connected with people or places which are acknowledged and respected for having connections with the Divine. Determination and choice in these matters is institutional, and in order to know which objects are sacred, one needs to grasp important conventions. Religious activities are recognized as such because people know what their religious leaders do and what goes on in religious buildings. Thus there can be no private religious activities which cannot be referenced back to a meaning for a participating community.

Disbrey wants to argue that her use of institutional theory does not lead to unacceptable forms of essentialism or relativism, but helps us to understand, rather than define. The fact that a strong cognitive relativism is implied by her theory, does not in itself render claims for absolute truth meaningless. 'An institutional theory of religion denies that there is any property of objects, or quality of experiences, or kinds of activity, attitude or instinct that can be identified as, or used to identify what counts as religious, independently of, or prior to, cultural institutions' (p. 224)—rather it is historical continuity that is of paramount importance.

This means that there are no constraints on what may be counted religious, although individuals are bound by history—by the activities that have so far been accommodated by the community. The community itself, note, is not the institution. The institution is the practice(s), the community, the people. This distinction may well be useful to the Artworld.

In the past, Disbrey claims, Philosophy of Religion has been mainly concerned with justifi-

cation, whereas she is interested in understanding. She sees her own approach as healthy and refreshing, also contributing to the way in which we understand artistic and religious institutions. A religious institution may, in time, be seen as irrelevant or non-useful. Pressures of war, famine, or technology bring about changes in outlook, and these changes pressurize the institutions. The institutions themselves may well be resistant to change. But sometimes the change comes about slowly, almost imperceptibly (attitude to cohabitation may be a current issue over which this has happened—Church opposition to it has been gradually dying away without anyone really noticing).

Disbrey concludes her book with an acknowledgement that further work is needed, and the claim that it would be valuable to pursue. This is undoubtedly true, and so, having commended her opening up of the possibilities, we can look forward to further developments, not least from the Artworld who may wish to consider whether an institutional theory should focus on the community of artists, or the set of practices they own.

GORDON J. GILES

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General Knowledge and Arts Education. An Interpretation of E. D. Hirsch's 'Cultural Literacy'.

By RALPH A. SMITH. University of Illinois Press 1994. pp. 160. £12.50

WHY DO so many university students have reading difficulties? Why has their possession of background knowledge and cultural information shrunk so? What can be done about it? In 1987 E. D. Hirsch, Jr, published *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*. Taking as his test of cultural literacy the intelligent reading of a newspaper, Hirsch argued that those who cannot do this lack the relevant general information, adequate cultural associations, and appropriate schemata. Consequently he sought to particularize what is needed. To this end he provided a list of items which he thought every literate American would know (supplemented by some items on science which they ought to know).

This knowledge would enable the individual to thrive in the modern world; further, as a

shared possession it would advantage society too, diminishing the risks of fragmentation, divisiveness, and public disorder. While acknowledging that much basic knowledge is vague and superficial, and much of it is acquired tacitly, Hirsch still believes it important that schools, particularly in the primary years, aim at teaching children a cultural core which will provide them with the cognitive maps necessary for effective communication. Hirsch distinguishes between the *extensive* curriculum, which aims to do this, and the *intensive* syllabus which (particularly at secondary level) encourages 'a fully developed understanding of a subject, making one's knowledge of it integrated and coherent.' Both syllabuses he considers necessary.

Smith's interest in the issues raised by Hirsch is whetted by his primary concern for the teaching of the arts. In Spring 1990, as editor of the *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, he brought out a special issue devoted to the problem of cultural literacy. Contributions were asked to identify the contextual information important for understanding and appreciating works of art. (Later the articles were published as a book, *Cultural Literacy and Arts Education*.)

In his present *General Knowledge and Arts Education* Smith surveys the continuing debate. He looks at discussions done independently of Hirsch, but where views run parallel with or converge upon what Hirsch has to say: these include E. H. Gombrich's essay 'The Tradition of General Knowledge' (1961), the educational philosophy of Harry S. Braudy, William Levi's *The Humanities Today* (1970), and Walter Kaufmann's *The Future of the Humanities* (1977). Smith also discusses the reception of Hirsch's book, focusing in particular on some critics of the book whom he castigates for either misreading or deliberately misrepresenting Hirsch's argument. He notes the insights provided by contributors to his special issue of the *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, drawing attention especially to Francis Sparshott's 'Contexts of Dance' and Jerrold Levinson's 'Musical Literacy'. He also explores certain allied topics of importance, particularly the issue of multiculturalism; in his final chapter he makes specific proposals about the principles that should

inform the intensive curriculum governing education in the arts.

Necessarily then, much of Smith's book consists of summaries of what others have said. But he pays close attention to their arguments, his paraphrases are adroit, he sets others' views in an illuminating framework, making clear what he himself thinks and why. Where distinctions can disentangle an argument, he skilfully provides them. His arguments, even on highly contentious issues, are always rational and dispassionate. His style is clear and judicious. When blunt speaking is called for, however, he is admirably forthright of those who, for doctrinaire political motives, reviled Hirsch's book he justly remarks, 'Unable to accommodate themselves to anything less than revolutionary change, revisionists further beg credibility by turning patronizing and vindictive whenever their ideas meet resistance—an attitude that itself reveals an underlying authoritarianism and elitism'.

Like Hirsch, Smith does not believe that multiculturalism should be a primary goal of American education, and he recognizes that in some guises it represents a threat to the development of the individual, to common communication, and to national solidarity. Extremest demands for multiculturalism explicitly 'aim to undermine the significance of Western civilization by claiming that Western traditions, owing to their purported racism, sexism, and elitism, are the cause of most of our modern problems'. The humanities, however, depend for their existence on the maintenance of continuity provided by the handing-on of culture, and upon the humanities largely depend our ideals of freedom of thought and public responsibility. Smith emphasizes that the general knowledge Hirsch attaches such importance to in no way politically constricts people; rather it is the basis on which any intelligent critique of public affairs is rendered possible (Malcolm X, equipping himself to be articulate by studying an English dictionary while in prison, is cited as a case in point.) Further, at a time when there is high level of cultural illiteracy in society, there seems something absurd about advocating the inculcation of other cultures when we are so signally failing

to transmit our own. This is not to say that, within the intensive curriculum in schools, and at the level which involves what Smith calls 'exemplar appreciation', a multicultural dimension is not appropriate, particularly as it serves to 'realize one of the important objective of humanistic education, the study of alternative modes of life and expression'.

The last chapter spells out how a humanities-based curriculum, through a balanced fare of art history, art criticism, aesthetics, and making art, may develop in students 'cultural percipience'. Here, as elsewhere, Smith tackles current aesthetic and educational problems with acute insight.

TREVOR WHITTOCK

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THE AESTHETIC APPRECIATION OF NATURE

Malcolm Budd

Die liebe Erde allüberall / Blüht auf im Lenz und grünt aufs neu! / Allüberall und
ewig blauen licht die Fernen! (Gustav Mahler, *Das Lied von der Erde*)

I

WHAT IS it to appreciate nature aesthetically? Is there such a thing as the aesthetic appreciation of nature? These questions refer on the one hand to an object and on the other to a type of appreciation: the object is nature and the type is aesthetic. So an illuminating response must do two things: it must provide both a delimitation of the field of nature and an account of what constitutes the aesthetic appreciation of items in that field. Although the first element of such a response appears to be independent of the second,¹ it is clear that the second must be informed by the first, for the aesthetic appreciation of nature, as I understand the idea, is the aesthetic appreciation of nature *as nature*.² It follows that in my understanding of the notion, not every aesthetic experience available from a natural object is an instance of the aesthetic appreciation of nature. The aesthetic appreciation of nature is not co-extensive with the set of aesthetic responses to natural objects or to aspects of what is found in nature. Rather, an aesthetic response to something natural constitutes aesthetic appreciation of nature only if the response is a response to nature *as nature*, and what this requires is that it must be integral to the rewarding (or displeasing) character of the experience offered by nature that its object is experienced *as natural*. Hence, if some expanse of an attractive shade of colour presented by an outcrop of ochre delights, but not *as a natural colour* or *as the colour of a natural object*, or a pattern in a snow flake delights, but not *as naturally produced*, or the iridescent colours of a hummingbird delight, but not *as the appearance of its wings*, although the experience is aesthetic and provided by nature, it is not an instance of the aesthetic appreciation of nature. Furthermore, the aesthetic appreciation of nature, as I understand the idea, requires not only that nature is appreciated *as nature* but that this appreciation does not essentially involve perceiving or imagining nature as a work of art.³ One kind of appreciation that the aesthetic appreciation of nature is

opposed to is artistic appreciation, so that the appreciation of nature as art is different from the aesthetic appreciation of nature. Accordingly, if an observer adopts towards nature an attitude appropriate to a work of art, regarding it *as if it were* such a work, the resulting experience, although aesthetic and directed at nature, falls outside the aesthetic appreciation of nature.⁴ Of course, it is possible to appreciate nature *as looking like a beautiful picture of nature*—nature as picturesque—although the occasions when this would be a natural thing to do are rare, since, except perhaps for landscape, nature does not in general strike us as looking like a picture—as it might when the prevailing conditions of illumination greatly weaken the impression of the third dimension—and other occasions would require the adoption of a peculiar attitude to the world, one that it does not invite. But this possibility is beside the point, for to appreciate nature as looking like a picture is not to appreciate nature *as nature*. In sum: the aesthetic appreciation of nature, as I understand the idea, is identical with the aesthetic appreciation not of that which is nature, but of nature *as nature and not as art*.

II

There are difficulties in arriving at a satisfactory understanding of the idea of nature as it figures in the aesthetic appreciation of nature. How should this idea be understood?⁵

In one sense, everything is part of nature, for there is a sense in which nature is just the totality of everything that is the case. But this all-inclusive sense does not distinguish nature from anything else, and what is needed is a distinction within nature, when nature is understood in this all-embracing sense as 'the world'.

Natural objects are often contrasted with man-made objects, even in the case of artefacts that are made out of natural objects merely by modifying them. But the distinction between what is man-made⁶ and what is not will divide the world into the natural and the non-natural only if the idea of art or skill is built into the idea of making, and perhaps not even then. For human beings make other human beings, usually by natural means, not by art or skill, and the human body remains a natural object no matter how it may be clothed, or shaped or coloured by human design.⁷ So what is natural should be opposed not to what is man-made but to what is artificial (a product of human artifice).

What does nature consist of? Well, there are natural *substances* (gold, water), natural *species* (animals, insects, trees, shrubs, plants), natural *objects* (icebergs, mountains, volcanoes, planets, moons), natural *forces* (gravity, magnetism), natural *appearances* (the sky, sunrise and sunset, a rainbow, shadows), natural *phenomena* (rivers, wind, rain, snow, clouds), natural *products* of living things (birdsong, beaver dams, birds' nests, spiders' webs, faeces, the smell of a rose), and so on. But in one sense, nature consists of individual natural things

standing in relations to one another. These things are instances of natural kinds—natural species and natural ‘substances’—and they interact through the operation of natural forces. So in nature there are, on the one hand, individual spatio-temporal items, and on the other, the types that they instantiate and the forces under the influence of which they affect one another.

Is the aesthetic appreciation of nature confined to individuals (and individuals as related to one another) or does it extend to kinds? In fact, this disjunction does not exhaust the possibilities. Schopenhauer held neither of these positions but maintained, instead, that the aesthetic appreciation of nature—of the beauty of individual natural objects—is essentially the appreciation of natural kinds (understood as atemporal items), which are made manifest to us in the perception of individual instances of those kinds: we appreciate, not individual natural items, nor natural kinds *as realized in the specific forms of individuals*, but natural kinds themselves, made available to us through the medium of the individuals we perceive. But he embraced this view in a peculiar form: natural kinds, although non-spatial and atemporal, are essentially perceptible items, object for a subject, ‘representations’; in the aesthetic appreciation of nature we have an especially vivid and compelling perceptual awareness of the inner essential nature of the natural kind an individual exemplifies; and each natural kind is beautiful.⁸ It follows from Schopenhauer’s position—and he explicitly drew this conclusion⁹—that from the aesthetic point of view it is immaterial which instance of a natural kind is being contemplated: differences among instances are aesthetically irrelevant, since the upshot of aesthetic contemplation is always the same, namely, awareness of the natural kind itself, the proper object of aesthetic contemplation. Although Schopenhauer’s train of thought is not compelling, it suggests a significant difference between the aesthetic appreciation of nature and the appreciation of art: whereas two exactly similar objects of the same natural kind, two indistinguishable melons or ladybirds or sea trout, for example, must have the same aesthetic value in themselves, two exactly similar works of art, as has often been pointed out, might differ in artistic meaning with a resulting difference in artistic value.¹⁰

Much of terrestrial nature has not remained in its natural condition, but has been subjected to human interference. Wild animals have been domesticated, new strains of plant developed by selective breeding, species native to one area have been transplanted to other parts of the world, rivers have been dammed, land reclaimed from the sea, hillsides terraced, seas polluted, forests felled, and so on indefinitely. In some cases, humanity’s influence is detectable without specialist knowledge, being manifest in the result, at least in the short term; but often this is not so. In any case, much of our natural environment displays, for better or worse, the influence of humanity, having been shaped, to a greater or lesser extent, and in a variety of ways, by human purposes, so that little of the world’s landscape is in a natural condition. Accordingly, our

aesthetic experience of the natural world is often *mixed*—a mixture of the aesthetic appreciation of nature as nature with an additional element, of a variable nature, based on human design or purpose or activity.¹¹

A scene can consist entirely of natural objects yet be constructed or planned, wholly or in part, by humanity. Accordingly, the portion of the world a spectator is appreciating, a landscape, say, might contain only natural things but include traces of humanity, in the form of orchards, fields of wheat, or pastures on which cows have been put to graze, for example. But it might contain both natural and non-natural objects, houses and bridges, for instance. In both cases, the presence and character of the non-natural element might or might not be determined by aesthetic considerations; and if partly determined by aesthetic considerations, this might be in the light of the appearance of the non-natural element from the point of view a spectator happens to occupy or the path she is following, or not so. But although a natural item is often not in its natural state or natural location or habitat, or has arisen only through human contrivance or as an intended or unintended result of human activity, or is in a scene composed of natural objects but which has not been naturally produced, or is adjacent to or surrounded by non-natural items, or has been positioned where it is, not by nature, but by humanity, this does not prevent it from being appreciated aesthetically as natural and does not mean that its appreciation must be mixed. For whether an item is natural is not the same as whether other aspects of the scene or other properties of the item are natural, and it is possible, with more or less difficulty in particular cases, to focus one's interest only on what is natural. Whether what you are confronted by is (entirely) natural¹² is one thing; what it is about the situation you are appreciating is another. At a zoo you cannot appreciate an animal in its natural environment. But it does not follow that your appreciation must be of a caged animal—an animal as caged. Rather, you can ignore its surroundings and appreciate the animal itself (within the limits imposed by its captive state). In looking at a fountain, you are not looking at a natural state of affairs. Nevertheless, you can appreciate some of the perceptible properties of water, a natural substance, in particular its liquidity, mobility and the way in which it catches the light. All that follows from the fact that much of our natural environment displays the influence of humanity and that we are usually confronted by scenes that in various ways involve artifice is that the aesthetic appreciation of nature, if it is to be *pure*, must abstract from any design imposed on nature, especially a design imposed for artistic or aesthetic effect.¹³

III

But if the aesthetic appreciation of nature is the aesthetic appreciation of nature as nature, what is meant by a 'response to nature as nature'? There are two obvious possibilities, which I shall call the internal and external conceptions, the first given by a strong and the other by a weak reading of the phrase, the

external conception being entirely unproblematic. The weak reading understands the idea in a merely negative fashion: a response to nature as nature is just a response to nature *not* as whatever is opposed to nature—as art [or artefact], for example (so that there is no intended meaning or function to be understood).¹⁴ The strong reading requires more: a response to nature as nature is a response to nature, not merely ‘not as art [or artefact]’, but ‘in virtue of being natural’. Accordingly, in the case of an aesthetic response to a natural item, its being natural constitutes an element of one’s appreciation, i.e. of what one appreciates, so that it grounds and enhances, diminishes or otherwise transforms the experience. In other words: on the one hand, ‘as natural’ might mean ‘not as designed by humanity [or another intelligent species]’, so that certain possible aspects of an item—the item’s being an artefact, in particular a work of art, and any characteristic of the item that being a work of art or another kind of artefact are necessary conditions of—are to be deemed *irrelevant* to its appreciation; on the other hand, ‘as natural’ might be understood to imply that the appreciation must be *based* on the item’s being natural, in which case a replica that mimics the item’s appearance, experienced as being non-natural, would not do just as well.

The requirement imposed by the strong reading might induce scepticism about the possibility of the aesthetic appreciation of nature.¹⁵ How could an aesthetic response be founded on the fact that its object is natural? How could the fact that an item is natural be integral to, or integrated into, an aesthetic response to it? The answer is, in outline, simple. For it is a general truth that we are delighted or otherwise moved by states of affairs, processes, and so on *under certain concepts or descriptions*;¹⁶ the descriptions under which we experience something properly affect the nature of our response to it; accordingly, the fact that we experience something as natural might be integral to the emotion we feel towards it, so that if this emotion is a component of an aesthetic response to the object, this response is based on the object’s being part of nature.

Consider, for example, the aesthetic appreciation of birdsong. What is the object of delight—what do we delight in—when we take an aesthetic delight in birdsong *as birdsong*? As with all other instances of the aesthetic appreciation of nature untouched by human hands, the appreciation of birdsong is free from a certain constraint of understanding, namely the understanding of its meaning *as art*. This is not to say that if you delight in listening to the songs of birds, your delight is aesthetic only if you hear the sounds merely *as patterns* of sounds. On the contrary, you hear the sounds *as products of [unaided] bodily actions*, of ‘voices’, or ‘whistles’, or ‘warbles’. But you do not hear them *as intentionally determined by artistic considerations*. You delight in the seemingly endless and effortless variety of a song thrush’s song—variations in pitch, timbre, dynamics, rhythm and vocal attack, for example—but not as the product of artistry and not as a construction guided by consideration of its

effectiveness as art. The song consists of a series of rhythmic phrases, the various segments differing from one another in the number of similar phrases that form the segment and in the nature of the constituent phrases, which vary in the number, duration, timbre, pitch and loudness of the sounds that compose them. These phrases succeed one another but never seem to reach a final goal, a final ending; instead, they continue for an indefinite time in a way that does not appear to be meaningful overall. In other words, you hear the song as an unpredictable, apparently random *mélange* of phrases. Now the aesthetic listener is not absolutely required to ignore the actual function of the bird's singing, which is to affirm its territory and, perhaps, to attract a mate. It might even be possible to appreciate the song not just as 'music' but as especially well suited to its seductive function, although it is hard to see that any such sense of appropriateness by one of us could be securely based in an awareness of what it is like to be a female song thrush.¹⁷ But such a possibility aside, the song of a thrush is heard as being attractive to listen to, in its own right, in abstraction from its function of seducing the opposite sex. The object of aesthetic delight is the sounds *as issuing 'naturally' from a living, sentient creature*, more specifically, a bird.¹⁸

With this illustration in mind, we can return to and fill in the outline answer to the sceptical doubt. In one sense, what you experience when you experience an item under one description is not the same as what you experience if you experience that item under another, incompatible, description. In other words, your experience of an item is sensitive to what you experience it as, so that an experience of it under one description has a different phenomenology from that of an experience under an incompatible description. Furthermore, the description under which you experience something constrains the qualities that such an item can manifest to you, that is, that it can display as an item of the kind that falls under that description; and so qualities of an item available under one description might not be available under another description. It follows that there is no difficulty in the idea of a response to nature being a response to it *as nature*. Hence, scepticism about the idea of the aesthetic appreciation of nature must be focused specifically on the possibility of an *aesthetic* response to nature *as nature*. But how easy or difficult it is for nature, or a particular natural item, to meet the requirement imposed by the internal conception turns on the idea of the aesthetic, more specifically, the idea of an aesthetic response to something. It is therefore necessary to clarify the idea of an aesthetic response.

IV

What makes a response *aesthetic*? Is it the intrinsic nature of the response or the nature of the features to which it is a response? What constitutes aesthetic, as opposed to non-aesthetic, appreciation? What is necessary, and what is sufficient, for a response to something to be an aesthetic response to that item?

Many attempts have been made to capture the notion of what is aesthetic, concentrating on the idea of aesthetic judgement, or the idea of aesthetic properties, or the idea of aesthetic experience, pleasure or emotion, or some other aspect of the aesthetic. Perhaps the aesthetic should be elucidated in terms of the judgement that lies at the heart of an aesthetic response, the judgement that the response is founded upon; or in terms of the property or properties (Beauty, Sublimity, Gracefulness) it is a response to; or in terms of the property it 'projects' upon its object ('Beauty' construed as a projective property); or in terms of some other aspect of its phenomenology, its hedonic or affective character, for example; or in terms of a reaction, positive, negative or one of indifference, to certain kinds of property, e.g. immediately perceptible qualities, manifest to the person who has no non-perceptual knowledge of the object, or, instead, the object's 'form', in either case the reaction being to the object's appearance, not to what it actually is; or in terms of a response caused and sustained by a specific kind of attitude ('the aesthetic attitude') adopted towards an object; or in terms of a distinctive kind of value, 'aesthetic value'; or in terms of some combination of these suggestions.¹⁹ But such attempts do not command assent, if they are seen as attempts to capture some commonly and pre-theoretically recognized notion of the aesthetic. And it is unhelpful merely to be told that the idea of the aesthetic, as commonly understood, lacks an essence, covering an indeterminate set of heterogeneous responses.

It is true that the idea of the aesthetic, both in everyday speech and philosophy, is too indefinite and multivalent to merit close attention. The best that can be hoped for, therefore, is an account that captures what, once articulated, appears to be central to at least one familiar conception of the idea; that is neutral about the relative importance or priority of art and nature within the field of the aesthetic; and that chimes with our own experience of nature, art and other objects of aesthetic interest. An attractive conception of the aesthetic along these lines represents a response as being aesthetic insofar as the response is directed at the experienced properties of an item,²⁰ the nature and arrangement of its elements or the interrelationships among its parts or aspects, and which involves a felt positive or negative reaction to the item, considered in itself, rather than as satisfying a pre-existing desire for the existence of something of that kind,²¹ so that what governs the response is whether the object is intrinsically rewarding or displeasing to experience in itself. Such a conception applies to nature and art; it allows for the aesthetic appreciation of sport, juggling, circus acts, furniture, clothes, wine, motor cars, machines and tools of all kinds, and much else; it does not discriminate against certain kinds of perceptible property in favour of one privileged kind; and it does not restrict aesthetic experience to a small class of categories (such as experiences of the beautiful and the sublime).²² For the present purpose it does not matter if this conception is thought not to exhaust the nature of an aesthetic response, or

to be inferior to some alternative conception, as long as the satisfaction of the condition it articulates is considered sufficient for a response reasonably to be deemed aesthetic.

V

We now have an understanding of the idea of (the internal conception of) a response to nature *as nature*, and also the idea of an *aesthetic* response. If we marry these two ideas we have the idea of an aesthetic response to nature *as nature*. What this comes to is, in effect, the idea of a response to a natural item, grounded on its naturalness—on its being a part of nature or on its being a specific kind of natural item—focused on its elements or aspects as structured or interrelated in the item, the item being experienced as intrinsically rewarding, unrewarding or displeasing, the hedonic character of the reaction being 'disinterested'. So the question is whether—and, if so, how—nature, or a particular natural item, can be the intentional object of such a response. In what way, if any, can the fact that something is natural, or a certain kind of natural thing, ground an aesthetic response to it?

How the very naturalness of an object—the mere fact that the object is natural, not its being a natural thing of a certain kind—can properly ground an aesthetic response to it is severely limited,²³ for what is common to all natural items in virtue of being natural is only a negative, not a positive, characteristic: they must not be the products of human skill or design. This leaves only such a possibility as marvelling at the fact that something as beautiful, attractive or remarkable as *this*—a rainbow or the exquisite fan-shaped leaf of a ginkgo, for example—is a product of nature. So if the idea of the aesthetic appreciation of nature *as nature* (on the internal conception) is coherent and the aesthetic appreciation of nature can have a more substantial foundation than the mere naturalness of its object, there must be aspects or properties that a natural item can possess in virtue of which it can be appreciated aesthetically *as natural*. What kinds of feature might these be?

Now nature exhibits a remarkable variety of very different kinds of things—living and non-living, sentient and non-sentient, animal and non-animal, and so on—and the aesthetic appreciation of nature ranges over everything in nature,²⁴ often in more than one way, involving either a single perceptual mode or a combination, focusing on a single natural object, at rest or in motion, at a moment or over time, or a product of a natural object, or a complex of natural items, or a natural process, or an appearance or impression (perhaps a changing one, as when mist slowly clears or the sun rises or sets). It would therefore be exceptionally daunting and probably fruitless to attempt an exhaustive account of the kinds of aspects in virtue of which natural items can be appreciated aesthetically *as natural*. But the principle that would underlie such an attempt is clear. The crucial question is, what qualities capable of aesthetic appreciation—in themselves or in virtue of their contribution to an

overall aesthetic effect or structure—might be possessed by an item in virtue of being natural or in virtue of being a certain kind of natural item? So what is required is the identification of characteristics that are capable of figuring in aesthetic appreciation, whether this is positive or negative, and that accrue to an item only in virtue of its being a natural item of a certain kind.

It is easy to indicate examples of such characteristics. For instance, there are qualities that can accrue to something only because it is a form of life. A living thing has a history of a distinctive kind, a life of growth and decline, nourished by its environment, at the mercy of the elements, perhaps responding to or anticipating changes in the seasons, its external appearance being determined by natural processes and structures within it; and this enables its condition at a certain time to be seen as a stage in or phase of its development, wherein it is flourishing or wilting, in a state of need or decay, and as contrasting with earlier or later conditions. Thus the fact that a natural item is a tree allows its form to be seen as determined by its internal nature, its age, its habitat and the friendly or hostile forces of nature, and its condition at any time of the year to be seen as determined by the cycle of the seasons. This enables the aesthetic observer to delight not only in the visual appearance of its blossoms, say, but in what they indicate, and to experience the flowering of the tree as a manifestation and beautiful expression of the resurgence of life triggered by the arrival of spring; or to marvel at the way in which the tree, restricted by its intrinsic nature, has adjusted to the constraints imposed on it by its location, its environment and the climate. Again, there are many kinds of quality that accrue to an item only in virtue of its being a sentient thing, capable of locomotion. For example, only sentient creatures can be seen as looking at or otherwise perceiving the world, and in particular as being aware of the presence of another creature, and so as exploring, hunting, diving, disputing a territory or engaging in courtship rituals; and there are styles of movement that are specific to sentient creatures, as with the graceful movements of a gazelle, and styles of movement that only sentient creatures of a certain kind are capable of, as with the various forms of the flight of birds. These open the possibility of a distinctive kind of aesthetic delight—at the cavorting of an otter or a school of dolphins at play or the exploratory behaviour of a fox cub, for instance. Furthermore, the parts of both sentient and non-sentient living things, animals and plants, for example, have natural functions and a sentient creature has a style of life determined by its nature. In each kind of case, there is a possible source of aesthetic delight focused on the idea of suitability: the parts of these living things can be seen as manifestly or strikingly suitable to discharging their functions, especially in the given environment and climate, and the creature can be seen as perfectly suited to its style of life.²⁸

As these examples show, there is no inherent difficulty in the concept of the aesthetic appreciation of nature: whichever conception of a response to

nature as nature is preferred, the idea of the aesthetic appreciation of nature as nature is coherent and it is possible for the aesthetic appreciation of nature to be solidly founded on characteristics that accrue to items in virtue of their being natural items of certain kinds.

VI

A further clarification of the idea of the aesthetic appreciation of nature is achieved by the resolution of a number of interlinked issues about the identification of natural things, ignorance of their nature, mistakes about them, and the relevance of 'scientific' understanding. What kind of understanding of nature does a correct and full aesthetic appreciation of it require? Do we need the knowledge of the natural scientist—the naturalist, the geologist, the biologist and the ecologist?²⁶ Does experiencing something with 'scientific' understanding of it deepen or enhance the aesthetic appreciation of it? Does it matter aesthetically whether you correctly experience something as being a certain type of natural phenomenon or of natural kind K? Does it matter whether you misexperience something as being of a certain natural kind?²⁷ Does it matter whether you are, not mistaken about, but ignorant of the natural kind you are appreciating?²⁸

Clearly, the mere ability to identify things as being of certain types on the basis of their appearance, to classify them (either under 'everyday' or 'technical' categories), to give names to them—to clouds, for example—does not thereby endow the subject with an enhanced appreciation of nature, although it may be the result of or encourage or facilitate a heightened or finer or richer awareness of natural features.²⁹ But there are cases where knowledge of the nature of a phenomenon—not merely the ability to identify that type—can transform one's aesthetic experience of nature. People have thicker or thinner conceptions of the nature of the phenomena which they see or otherwise perceive under concepts of those phenomena: children have exceptionally thin conceptions, adults have conceptions of greater and varying thickness. The thicker the conception, the greater the material available to transform the subject's aesthetic experience of nature. It follows that people can recruit to their perceptions of natural phenomena different levels of understanding, superficial or deep. If you have the right kind of understanding of nature, you can recruit to your perceptual experience of nature relevant thoughts, emotions and images unavailable to those who lack that understanding—as when you see a 'shooting star' as the glow of a meteor burning in the earth's atmosphere, or a gigantic crater as having been produced by the impact of a meteorite, or a canyon as having been cut by a swift-flowing river, or a mountain as a massive block of rock thrust up by enormous pressures beneath the earth's surface, or—an extreme case—the Himalayas as the product of a collision between the Indian subcontinent and the main bulk of Asia, or obsidian as a coal-black volcanic glass composed of fast-cooled lava, or stalactites, stalag-

mites and helictites as formed by minerals deposited by dripping water, or broomrape as a parasite that feeds on other plants. And the transformation your experience undergoes when relevant knowledge is enlisted carries with it the possibility of varieties of aesthetic appreciation of nature and species of aesthetic emotional responses otherwise unavailable.³⁰ If when looking at a cloud you identify its type as cumulonimbus, your aesthetic experience is not thereby transformed. But if, in virtue of additional knowledge, you see the anvil top and ragged base of a cumulonimbus as a *thundercloud*, your impression of the cloud might change, for you might now have a sense of *power* in the cloud and see it as shaped by powerful forces at work in it; and this sense of power will inform your experience and change the nature of your aesthetic response. Or consider the experience of looking at the Milky Way. As a child, you might experience it just as a white streak with a somewhat milky appearance running across the night sky. You might then come to see it as being the appearance of an exceptional congregation of stars in that region of the night sky, but possess no greater understanding of it. Finally, when you realize the truth about what you are seeing and why you are seeing it, your experience can assume quite a different nature: you now experience the Milky Way as the view into the heart of our galaxy, and by the use of your imagination you 'see' yourself as located on a small planet of a minor star on one of the spiralling arms near the edge of the galaxy into whose heart you are looking. A correct understanding of what is visible in the night sky thus makes possible a transformation of your experience from a condition in which you are struck by a milky path running across the sky to one in which your position in the universe—your position and that of everyone else you care about—is manifest to you in a manner that encourages an awareness of the minute stage on which the history of humanity unfolds, the peripheral status of what happens on the earth even in our own galaxy, the awesome immensity of the multitude of stars that compose that galaxy, and the realization that you are forever isolated from whatever civilizations, perhaps countless many, are present elsewhere in space and that you must remain ignorant of their different natures and histories, no matter how fascinating these might be. Such thoughts, harnessed to your perceptual experience, constitute an important change in your perspective, and are likely to produce one of those peculiar combinations of mental states that have been called experiences of the sublime³¹—in this case a feeling of wonder combined with an experience of vulnerability woven together with a sense of the relative insignificance of your individual self, a mental state with both a positive and a negative side, a duality that has often been thought of as the hallmark of an experience of the sublime.

But this is not to say that knowledge of the nature of a phenomenon always endows the subject with the ability to transform her perception of the world and facilitate an enhancement of aesthetic appreciation. Many of us know the

explanation of rainbows, but not so many of us know the explanation of supernumerary bows. In either case, it seems that possession of the explanation does not make possible an aesthetic experience of its object that is otherwise unavailable. Most of us know that water is H_2O , but this knowledge does not enable an enhanced aesthetic appreciation of water, in dew, mist, rain, snow, rivers or waterfalls, for example. For knowledge of the nature of a natural phenomenon to be able to effect a transformation of the subject's aesthetic experience of it, the knowledge must be such that it can permeate or inform the perception of the phenomenon, so that what the subject sees it *as* is different from how it is seen by someone who lacks the requisite knowledge. We do not see water or copper differently from one who is ignorant of their nature: we do not see water as H_2O or copper as possessing atomic number 29, for the knowledge we bring to our perception is not such as to integrate with the perception in such a manner as to generate a new perceptual-cum-imaginative content of experience.

If you misexperience an item as being of natural kind *K* through misperception, then of course your aesthetic appreciation of it is malfounded. But to misexperience an item as being of a certain natural kind is not of any aesthetic significance if, first, there is no error in perception, and, second, the mistake is merely a matter of getting the *name* wrong, as when I can see a flower perfectly clearly, mistakenly take it to be an orchid (when in fact it is a fritillary) and have no further knowledge of or belief about either kind. Suppose, however, that you do have some relevant knowledge of two natural kinds and you misidentify the natural kind to which an item belongs, the mistake not being founded on misperception. In such a case, the item will usually possess many aspects that you can respond to aesthetically without error *as* aspects of a natural thing, although you are mistaken about what kind of thing it is.³² But if you aesthetically appreciate a natural object *as* an instance of natural kind *K*, and it is not of kind *K*, then your appreciation is, in that respect, malfounded, and an awareness of your mistake undermines *that* aspect of your appreciation. For it is no longer available to you with respect to that object and you must reject *as* mistaken the enjoyment or excitement you felt that arose from this misapprehension. Furthermore, your misidentification might in any case result in aesthetic deprivation, for the correct identification of the type of natural object before you might enable an additional element of aesthetic appreciation of nature *as* nature: perceiving the thing under its true kind might allow not only the appreciation of all that the mistaken identification allows that is not malfounded, but something aesthetically valuable in addition.

NOTES

- ¹ But in fact the relevant understanding of the concept of nature cannot be determined by putting aesthetic considerations entirely to one side: the desired distinction between the natural and the non-natural can be drawn only by bearing in mind the purpose for which it is required.
- ² Of course, this is not the only way of understanding the idea of the aesthetic appreciation of nature, which might instead be understood to mean no more than the aesthetic appreciation of anything that is available in nature for aesthetic appreciation—any *natural* thing or phenomenon that is susceptible of aesthetic appreciation. But just as artistic appreciation is the appreciation of art *as* art, so the aesthetic appreciation of nature should be understood to demand the appreciation of nature *as* nature. It will be clear that my conception of the aesthetic appreciation of nature requires that one appreciates nature *under a concept*, so that on Kant's understanding of the experience of finding something 'freely' beautiful, the aesthetic appreciation of nature is impossible—a conclusion profoundly unsympathetic to Kant, given the special claim he makes for it. See note 14.
- ³ It follows that those who have assigned primacy to the aesthetic appreciation of art will find it hard to accommodate the aesthetic appreciation of nature *as nature*. The account of the aesthetic that I later offer assigns priority neither to the appreciation of art nor to the appreciation of nature. Of course, art can be imposed on nature, in which case aesthetic appreciation will combine the aesthetic appreciation of art with the aesthetic appreciation of nature *as* nature. See note 10.
- ⁴ Those who have regarded nature as an artefact of God and have delighted aesthetically in it *as* such a creation, so that their appreciation is permeated by the idea of it as the creation of God, appreciate nature as an artefact, but not thereby as a work of art (unless it is God's revealed intention that it should be so regarded). The aesthetic appreciation of nature might well be understood to require that nature is not seen as an artefact, which would appear to rule that the aesthetic appreciation of nature as an artefact of God falls outside the aesthetic appreciation of nature as nature, but an artefact is normally something made from what is present in nature, and the creation of nature *ex nihilo*, rather than from pre-existing natural things, might well be thought, in virtue of its exceptional character, to fall outside the requirement. Nevertheless, the aesthetic appreciation of nature as an artefact of God conceives of nature as being designed, and inasmuch as God's design is read into nature its appreciation differs in a crucial respect from the aesthetic appreciation of nature as nature.
- ⁵ In a different context Hume wrote: 'our answer to this question depends upon the definition of the word, Nature, than which there is none more ambiguous and equivocal' (David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book III, Part I, §II).
- ⁶ 'Man-made' is here understood not only in a gender-free sense, but as including anything made by another, non-human, intelligent species as a result of a decision to do so, if there should be such a species in the universe.
- ⁷ But insofar as it is a human artefact (usually a self-artefact), it is a natural item stamped with human activity, even if not 'aestheticized' by human design. In one sense, what makes a human body a natural object—whether it has been produced naturally or by artificial means—is the fact that its principle of growth as it endures through time is a matter of nature, not human contrivance: as with certain other kinds of natural objects, trees, for example, the pattern of growth of human bodies is inherent in them.
- ⁸ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), Vol. 1, §41, and 'On the Metaphysics of the Beautiful and Aesthetics', §212, in *Parerga and Paralipomena*, Vol. 2, trans. E. F. J. Payne (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974). Schopenhauer's thoughts about the aesthetic appeal of natural ensembles of natural objects,

rather than the aesthetic contemplation of an individual natural thing, reveal his difficulty in accommodating the insights yielded by his own aesthetic experience within the general framework of his metaphysics and aesthetics

⁹ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. 1, §41

¹⁰ See Kendall L. Walton, 'Categories of Art', *The Philosophical Review*, LXXIX (1970), and Arthur C. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (London: Harvard U.P., 1983).

¹¹ From an aesthetic point of view, the imposition of art on the natural world, or making a portion of nature into a work of art, as with garden design or the art of landscape, the aesthetic appreciation of which requires two forms of aesthetic appreciation to function hand in hand, is of special interest. There are significant differences between the appeal of 'wild' nature and any form of domesticated nature or nature stamped with human design, and within the second class there are further differences, especially between those instances subjected to art and those not so subjected.

¹² If to be completely natural a scene must lack all signs of humanity, there cannot be people in it. If all that needs to be missing are signs of human artifice, then, since human bodies are natural objects, but *clothed* human bodies are not, although the scene cannot contain clothed human bodies it can contain naked human bodies—so long as they do not indicate artifice. (But perhaps the manifest possibility of human artifice, as indicated by the presence of human bodies, might be thought to detract from the naturalness of the scene, thus avoiding this curious result.)

¹³ A beholder might not be aware that a landscape has been in some ways designed by humanity and might delight in it as nature's handiwork. In such a case, although the delight in the way in which the elements of the landscape relate to one another is aesthetic delight in what is taken to be nature as nature, it is malfounded. It is not delight in what actually is natural as being natural.

¹⁴ In fact, taking nature to be opposed to art (or artefactuality), the external conception can

assume two forms, the non-artistic and the anti-artistic. The non-artistic construes 'as nature' to mean only 'not in virtue of being a work of art'. An example of the non-artistic response would be this. an observer comes across an object, does not know, and is indifferent to, whether it is a natural object or a work of art, yet finds its appearance beautiful (whatever the status of the object might be). The anti-artistic construes 'as nature' to mean 'in virtue of lacking the distinctive properties of works of art'. In this case, the observer is not indifferent to whether the object appreciated is a work of nature or of art; on the contrary, the observer's response is founded on the thought that the object is not art.

¹⁵ Kant insisted that you experience an object as being 'freely', as opposed to 'dependently', beautiful only if your pleasure in perceiving it is founded on nothing other than, as I shall put it, the analogue content of your perception of an object's intrinsic nature, and then only on the perceived 'form' of the object, so that any other concepts under which you perceive it play no essential role in generating and maintaining the pleasure. He also held that the aesthetic appreciation of natural beauty is, paradigmatically, a matter of free beauty. This conjunction of views implies that there is no such thing as the aesthetic appreciation of nature as beautiful, in the internal sense. The moral is that experiencing an item *under a concept* has a much greater significance in aesthetic experience than is credited to it by Kant's aesthetic theory.

¹⁶ To experience O under description 'D' is for it to seem to you in your experience that O is D: this is how your experience represents O.

¹⁷ We cannot even reasonably conclude how in the most fundamental sense it sounds to a song thrush on the basis of how it sounds to us. For example, a song thrush might hear additional sounds in the song, sounds too high for us to hear.

¹⁸ But is this quite right? To appreciate it fully does one need to appreciate it as the song of a bird, specifically? And, if so, as the song of a particular kind of bird, a blackbird, for

example? Most of us acquire, at best, the concept of a certain type of bird and, perhaps, an idea of the look of a bird of that type, or an ability to recognize such a bird by sight. Aesthetic appreciation of a bird's song appears to be the same before and after you learn which type of bird it is, or whether you know it's a song thrush, say, and how a song thrush looks, at rest or in flight.

- ¹⁹ Leaving aside his misbegotten notion of an 'aesthetic idea', Kant operated with an exceptionally clear and minimal conception of the aesthetic: a judgement is aesthetic if and only if it is one whose 'determining ground' cannot be other than 'subjective', that is, a feeling of pleasure or displeasure (see Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §1). And he distinguished three positive types (although there are more): the judgement that an item is pleasant, the judgement that an item is beautiful, and the judgement that an item is sublime. (In fact, Kant maintained that we speak improperly in predicating sublimity of a natural item: the natural item is only the occasion of our becoming conscious of our superiority to nature in being moral agents, the experience of which is properly called 'sublime'.) In what follows, I am not rejecting this conception but offering a rather more substantial conception of the aesthetic—or, at least, of an aesthetic response. Jerrold Levinson presents a superior conception of aesthetic pleasure in his 'pleasure, aesthetic', in David Cooper (ed.), *A Companion to Aesthetics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); Kendall Walton presents a superior conception of aesthetic value (and also aesthetic pleasure) in 'How Marvelous! Toward a Theory of Aesthetic Value', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (Summer 1993).

- ²⁰ 'An item' includes not just physical objects or combinations of objects, or types, but also appearances, events, processes and any other kind of thing that is susceptible of aesthetic appreciation. 'Experienced properties' is to be understood in an all-embracing sense, covering not only immediately perceptible properties, but also relational, representational, symbolic and

emotional properties, and including the type or kind of thing the item is experienced as being.

- ²¹ This means that aesthetic pleasure is 'disinterested' in Kant's sense (see op. cit., §2).
- ²² Traditionally, the aesthetic appreciation of nature was often thought of as consisting of two (positive) kinds: the aesthetic experience of the beautiful and the aesthetic experience of the sublime. How comprehensive this typology is, and in particular whether it is exhaustive of the possibilities, depends on how these two kinds of experience are characterized. It will not be exhaustive unless the beautiful covers all purely positive possible aesthetic responses to nature, and the sublime all positive responses with an admixture of negative emotion.
- ²³ Compare and contrast the difficulty in seeing how the mere fact that an item is a work of art—rather than some specific property it possesses in virtue of being, not nature, but a work of art—could ground an aesthetic response to the item as a work of art.
- ²⁴ The aesthetic appreciation of nature is often restricted to the 'macroscopic'. But there is no good reason for excluding microscopic entities or the appearances of natural items (snowflakes, for example) when seen, not with the naked eye, but under a microscope. There is no relevant difference between unaided perception, perception by means of a microscope and many other forms of aided perception—perception of distant objects by optical telescopes, for example.
- ²⁵ 'It is evident, that one considerable source of beauty in all animals is the advantage which they reap from the particular structure of their limbs and members, suitably to the particular manner of life, to which they are by nature destined' (David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning The Principles of Morals*, Sect. VI, Part II). The well-known opening lines of Hopkins' *The Windhover*, which seek to capture a falcon's manner of flight and an observer's emotional response to the enviable ability that enables the falcon to flourish in the element in which it must live, provide a vivid illustration:
I caught this morning morning's minion,
king- / dom of daylight's dauphin,

dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding /
Of the rolling level underneath him steady
air, and striding / High there, how he rung
upon the rein of a wimpling wing / In his
ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing, / As a
skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend:
the hurl and gliding / Rebuffed the big
wind My heart in hiding / Sturred for a
bird,—the achieve of, the mastery of the
thing!

²⁶ As Allen Carlson has argued: see, for example, 'Appreciation and the Natural Environment', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol 37 (1979), reprinted in Alex Neill and Aaron Ridley (eds), *Arguing about Art* (London: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1995)

²⁷ The question concerns the misidentification of the natural kind to which the object belongs, not the misidentification of a natural object as a work of art or vice versa. This other question (along with much else, especially significant differences between the aesthetic appreciation of nature and artistic appreciation, about which I have said nothing in this paper) is well dealt with in R. W. Hepburn's seminal essay 'Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty', in B. Williams and A. Montefiore (eds), *British Analytical Philosophy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), reprinted in Hepburn's *'Wonder' and Other Essays* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh U.P., 1984). There are further kinds of misunderstanding of the natural world that affect the aesthetic appreciation of nature, but these are also not my concern here

²⁸ Ignorance about the natural kind you are appreciating can be more or less extreme:

you might see a flower but not as a flower, only as a coloured three-dimensional natural object of some kind jutting from the earth; or you might see an arum lily as a flower of some kind, but one that you do not recognize

²⁹ But unless you see O as being of natural kind K, you cannot experience it as being, or not being, an especially beautiful specimen of that kind.

³⁰ The transformation of perception effected by knowledge of the nature of an object of aesthetic appreciation will by no means always result in an intensification of aesthetic delight. On the contrary, it can diminish or erase it, as might happen when a plant is seen as poisonous; or the beautiful appearance of a turquoise sea anemone might recede or disappear when its protuberances are seen as tentacles with the power to paralyse small prey and its greenish centre is seen as its mouth.

³¹ Kant disallowed such thoughts to enter into the experience of the sublime in nature, but his reason for doing so is not compelling (see Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, 'General Remark upon the Exposition of Aesthetic Reflective Judgements')

³² As Noel Carroll has emphasized, and has illustrated with someone's taking a whale to be a fish, rather than a mammal. see his 'On Being Moved by Nature. Between Religion and Natural History', in Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell (eds), *Landscape, Natural Beauty and the Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1993), reprinted in Alex Neill and Aaron Ridley (eds), *Arguing about Art* (London: McGraw-Hill Inc., 1995)

MODERATE MORALISM

Noël Carroll

I. INTRODUCTION

FOR ALMOST three decades, public discourse about art has become increasingly preoccupied with moral issues. Indeed, the discussion of literature in some precincts of the humanities nowadays is nearly always in terms of morals, or, as its proponents might prefer to say, in terms of politics (though here I must hasten to add that the politics in question are generally of the sort that is underwritten by a moral agenda). Moreover, the artworld itself has begun to reflect this preoccupation to the extent that disgruntled critics have started to wonder aloud when artists are going to become interested in making art again and are going to give up preaching. Remember the fracas over the 1993 Whitney Biennial? Or, look at virtually any issue of the *New Criterion*.

Of course, by remarking that this is a tendency recently come to the fore, I mean to signal that things have not always been this way. Within living memory, or, at least, within my memory, I still recall being admonished as an undergraduate not to allow my attention to wander 'outside the text'—where such things as moral questions lurked, as if, so to speak, on 'the wrong side of the tracks'.

My own initiation into the artworld occurred during the heyday of minimalism, which was understood alternatively as a project of aesthetic research into the essential conditions of painting or as an exercise in the phenomenology of aesthetic perception. In either case, it went without saying that the appropriate focus of one's attention was what was imprecisely called formal problems rather than, say, moral or political ones. In those days, it remained a common article of faith that the artistic realm is autonomous, somehow hermetically sealed off from the rest of our social practices and concerns. To talk about art from a moral point of view belied a failure of taste or intelligence, or, more likely, both.

The changes in criticism and artistic creativity to which I have already broadly alluded are, in part, explicit departures from and rebellions against the belief in the autonomy of art. Though admittedly often excessive, if not sometimes even downright paranoid, these developments, I feel, provide a generally healthy corrective to formalism and its corresponding doctrine of artistic autonomy. Yet of all the disciplines ready to acknowledge the

limitations of the presupposition of art's autonomy, contemporary analytic philosophy of art has been the slowest. A brief examination of the philosophical literature that has been produced since the end of World War II easily confirms that the relation of art to morality is a topic that has received and that continues to receive scant attention.

Perhaps one reason for this temporal lag is philosophy's status as a second-order discipline; the owl Minerva needs a functioning runway from which to take off. But, in any event, the recent resurgence of moralistic art and criticism should remind us, as Plato, Aristotle and even Hume already knew, that there are intimate relations between at least some art and morality that call for philosophical comment. One of the purposes of this paper is to contribute to the discussion of the relation of art to morality.

Moreover, it is my conviction that philosophy has a useful job to perform within the context of renewed interest in the moral dimension of art. For, although a great deal of contemporary criticism presupposes that art can be discussed and even evaluated morally, little effort has been devoted to working out the philosophical foundations of moral criticism beyond loudly and insistently protesting that the doctrines of formalism and artistic autonomy are obviously wrongheaded, repressive and undoubtedly pernicious. But this stance, it seems to me, simply ignores the powerful intuitions that underlie the claims in favour of artistic autonomy. Thus, in this paper, I will review two forms of autonomism—what I call radical autonomism and moderate autonomism—in order to argue dialectically for an alternative position which I call moderate moralism.¹

II. RADICAL AUTONOMISM

Radical autonomism is the view that art is a strictly autonomous realm of practice. It is distinct from other social realms which pursue cognitive, political or moral value. On this account, because art is distinct from other realms of social value, it is inappropriate or even incoherent to assess artworks in terms of their consequences for cognition, morality and politics. In fact, according to Clive Bell, perhaps the best known radical autonomist, it is virtually unintelligible to talk of art *qua* art in terms of non-aesthetic concerns with cognition, morality, politics and so on.²

Autonomism of any sort provides an attractive antidote to the views of Plato, Tolstoy and innumerable other puritanical art critics. Opposing them, the autonomist maintains that art is intrinsically valuable, and that it is not and should not be subservient to ulterior or external purposes, such as promoting moral education. In this, autonomism appeals to the intuition, though maybe it is only a modern intuition already informed by autonomism, that artworks can be valuable, perhaps in virtue of the beauty they deliver to disinterested attention, irrespective of their social consequences.

We value artworks for their own sake, it is said—i.e. for the way in which they engage us, apart from questions of instrumental value. Autonomism squares with the intuition that what is valuable about our experiences of art is the way in which artworks absorb our attention and command our interest which, in turn, is part of the reason that artworks associated with obsolete systems of belief, both cognitive and moral, can nonetheless remain compelling. For, the autonomist claims, it is the artwork's design rather than its content that holds our attention.

In addition, autonomism is a satisfying doctrine for anyone who approaches the question of the nature of art with essentialist biases—that is, with the expectation that everything we call art will share a *uniquely* common characteristic which pertains distinctly to all and only art. This is the card that Clive Bell plays when he announces that unless we can identify such a common, uniquely defining feature for art, then when we use the concept, we gibber.

Of course, by declaring art to be utterly separate from every other realm of human practice, the autonomist secures the quest for essentialism at a single stroke, if only by negation, by boldly asserting that art has nothing to do with anything else. It is a unique form of activity with its own purposes and standards of evaluation, generally calibrated in terms of formal achievement.

That those standards do not involve moral considerations, moreover, can be supported, autonomists argue, by noting that moral assessment cannot be an appropriate measure of artistic value, since not all artworks possess a moral dimension. I call this the common denominator argument. It presupposes that any evaluative measure that can be brought to bear on art should be applicable to all art. But since certain works of art—including some string quartets and some abstract visual designs—may be altogether bereft of moral significance, it makes no sense, so the argument goes, to raise issues of morality when assessing artworks. Moral evaluation is never appropriate to artworks, in short, because it is not universally applicable.

Likewise, that we are willing to call some artworks good despite their moral limitations—despite the fact that their moral insights may be paltry or even flawed—fits nicely with the autonomist contention that art has nothing to do with morality, as does the fact that with certain works of art, questions of morality make no sense whatsoever. The autonomist accounts for these putative facts by saying that art is valuable for its own sake and that it has its own unique grounds for assessment; art has its own purposes, and, therefore, its own criteria of evaluation.

Autonomism rides on the unexceptionable observation that art appears to aim, first and foremost, at being absorbing. The so-called aesthetic experience is centripetal. Thus, if the artwork essentially aims at our absorption in it, then it is valuable for its own sake. The thought that art is valuable for its

own sake, in turn, is believed to imply that it is not valuable for other reasons, especially cognitive, moral and political ones. However, this conclusion is a non sequitur. For, in ways to be pursued below, some art may be absorbing exactly because of the way in which it engages, among other things, the moral life of its audiences. That is, just because we value art for the way in which it commands our undivided attention, this does not preclude that some art commands our attention in this way just because it is interesting and engaging cognitively and/or, for our purposes, morally.

The autonomist is certainly correct to point out that it is inappropriate to invoke moral considerations in evaluating *all* art. Some art, at least, is altogether remote from moral considerations. And in such cases, moral discourse with reference to the artworks in question may not only be strained and out of place, but conceptually confused. Nevertheless, the fact that it may be a mistake to mobilize moral discourse with reference to some pure orchestral music or some abstract painting has no implications about whether it is appropriate to do so with respect to *King Lear* or *Potemkin*, since those works of art are expressly designed to elicit moral reactions, and it is part of the form of life to which they belong that audiences respond morally to them on the basis of their recognition that that is what they are intended to do, given the relevant social practices. That is, with cases like these, it is not peculiar, tasteless or dumb to talk about the artworks in question from a moral point of view, but normatively correct or appropriate, given the nature of the artworks in relation to the language game in which such talk occurs.

The common-denominator argument presupposes that there must be a single scale of evaluation that applies to all artworks. Whether or not there is such a scale—a vexed question if there ever was one—can be put to the side, however, because even if there is such a scale, that would fail to imply that it is the only evaluative consideration that it is appropriate to bring to bear on every artwork. For in addition to, for example, formal considerations, some artworks may be such that, given the nature of the artworks in question, it is also appropriate to discuss them in terms of other dimensions of value.

We may evaluate sledge hammers and jewellery hammers in terms of their capacities to drive nails, but that does not preclude further assessments of the former in terms of their capabilities to deliver great force to a single point in space or the latter to deliver delicate, glancing blows. These additional criteria are, of course, related to the kinds of things that sledge hammers and jewellery hammers respectively are. Similarly, the conviction that there may be some common standard of evaluation for all artworks, even if plausible, would not entail that for certain kinds of artworks, given what they are, considerations of dimensions of value beyond the formal, such as moral considerations, are out of bounds.

It is my contention that there are many kinds of artworks—genres, if you will—that naturally elicit moral responses, that prompt talk about themselves in terms of moral considerations, and even warrant moral evaluation. The common-denominator argument cannot preclude this possibility logically, for even if there is some global standard of artistic value (a very controversial hypothesis), there may be different local standards for different genres. This much is obvious: decibel level has a role to play in heavy metal music that is irrelevant to minuets. Moreover, with some genres, moral considerations are pertinent, even though there may be other genres where they would be tantamount to category errors.

Though no autonomist to date has been able to offer a positive characterization of the essence of art, the autonomist frequently relies on some conception of the nature of art in order to back up the common-denominator argument. That is, art, given its putatively generic nature, supposedly yields generic canons of assessment. However, we can challenge this appeal to the nature of art with appeals to the natures of specific artforms or genres which, given what they are, warrant at least additional criteria of evaluation to supplement whatever the autonomist claims is the common denominator of aesthetic evaluation.

In order to substantiate this abstract claim, let us take a look at the narrative arts (narrative literature, drama, film, painting and so on). It is of the nature of narrative to be incomplete. No author is absolutely explicit about the situations she depicts. Every narrative makes an indeterminate number of presuppositions and it is the task of readers, viewers and listeners to fill these in. Part of what it is to follow a story is to fill in the presuppositions that the narrator has left unsaid. If the story is about Sherlock Holmes, we presuppose that he is a man and not an android, though Conan Doyle never says so. If the story concerns ancient Rome, we presuppose the message was delivered by hand, not by fax.

No storyteller portrays everything that might be portrayed about the story she is telling; she must depend upon her audience to supply what is missing and a substantial and ineliminable part of what it is to understand a narrative involves filling in what the author has left out. It is of the nature of narrative to be incomplete in this way and for narrative communication to depend for uptake upon audiences supplying what has been left unremarked by the author.

Furthermore, what must be filled in in this way comes in all different shapes and sizes, including facts of physics, biology, history, religion and so on. Notably, much of the information that the author depends on the audience's bringing to the text is folk-psychological. The author need not explain why a character is saddened by her mother's death. The audience brings its understanding of human psychology to bear on the situation.

But it is not only the presupposed, implied or suggested facts about the fictional world and human psychology that the audience must fill in in order for

narratives to be intelligible. Understanding a narrative also requires mobilizing the emotions that are appropriate to the story and its characters. One does not understand *Trilby* unless one finds Svengali repugnant. Moreover, and this is where the connection with morality begins to enter, many of the emotions that the audience brings to bear, as a condition of narrative intelligibility, are moral both in the sense that many emotions, like anger (inasmuch as 'being wronged' is conceptually criterial for its application), possess ineliminable moral components, and in the sense that many of the emotions that are pertinent to narratives are frequently moral emotions, such as the indignation that pervades a reading of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Without mobilizing the moral emotions of the audience, narratives cannot succeed. They would appear unintelligible. One does not, I submit, understand the wedding scene in Ken Russell's production of *Madame Butterfly* unless one feels that Pinkerton is unworthy of his bride. Thus, activating moral judgements from audiences is a standard feature of successful narrative artworks. And this is the case, not only where the moral judgements play a role in emotional responses, but also where the audience understands the logic of a plot that deals wrongdoers their just deserts.

Part of what is involved, then, in the process of filling in a narrative is the activation of the moral powers—the moral judgements and the moral emotions—of audiences. Moreover, it is vastly improbable that there could be any substantial narrative of human affairs, especially a narrative artwork, that did not rely upon activating the moral powers of readers, viewers and listeners. Even modernist novels that appear to eschew 'morality' typically do so in order to challenge bourgeois morality and to enlist the reader in sharing their ethical disdain for it.

Earlier I noted that according to the radical autonomist, moral concern with artworks is regarded to be either a failure in taste or intelligence insofar as such concern is inappropriate with respect to art. Talk about morality is, on this account, out of place, if not conceptually incoherent. However, if understanding a narrative artwork is, as I have argued, so inextricably bound up with moral understanding, then at least with narrative artworks, it will be natural for moral concerns to arise in the course of our appreciation of narrative artworks and in our discussions of them.

Since narrative artworks necessarily depend upon activating our antecedent moral beliefs, concepts and feelings, it is no accident that we will be predisposed to discuss, to share, and to compare our moral reactions with other readers, listeners and viewers concerning the characters, situations and the texts that portray them, where, indeed, the authors of said texts have presented them to us with the clear intention of mobilizing, among other things, our moral responses. It is natural for us to discuss narrative artworks by means of ethical vocabularies because, due to the kinds of things they are, narrative artworks are designed to awaken, to stir up and to engage our moral

powers of recognition and judgement. The radical autonomist claims that moral discourse is alien to all artworks. But, given the nature of narrative artworks, it is germane to them. We may discuss the formal features of narrative artworks, but it is also apposite, given the nature of the beast, to discuss them from a moral point of view.³

The radical autonomist undoubtedly has a case against what might be called the radical moralist or Puritan—someone, perhaps, like Plato—who maintains that art should *only* be discussed from a moral point of view. But radical moralism is not my position, since I freely admit that some works of art may have no moral dimension, due to the kind of works they are, and because I do not claim that moral considerations trump all other considerations, such as formal ones. My position, moderate moralism, only contends that for certain genres, moral comment, along with formal comment, is natural and appropriate.

Moreover, the moderate moralist also contends that moral evaluation may figure in our evaluations of some artworks. For inasmuch as narrative artworks engage our powers of moral understanding, they can be assessed in terms of whether they deepen or pervert the moral understanding. That is, some artworks may be evaluated in virtue of the contribution they make to moral education.

Of course, there is a longstanding argument against the educative powers of artworks, *viz.* that what we typically are said to learn from artworks are nothing but truisms, which, in fact, everyone already knows and whose common knowledge may in fact be a condition for the intelligibility of the artworks in question. For example, no one *learns* that murder is bad from *Crime and Punishment* and, indeed, knowing that murder is bad may be a presupposition that the reader must bring to *Crime and Punishment* in order to understand it. Artworks, in other words, trade in moral commonplaces, and, therefore, do not really teach morality. They are not a source of moral education, but depend upon and presuppose already morally educated readers, viewers and listeners.

However, the characterization that I have offered of the relation of moral understanding does not fall foul of this objection. I agree that the moral emotions and judgements that narratives typically call upon audiences to fill in are generally already in place. Most narrative artworks do not teach audiences new moral emotions or new moral tenets. They activate pre-existing ones. Nevertheless, it is a mistake to presume that this may not involve moral education. That is, it is an error to presuppose that moral education only occurs when new moral emotions or tenets are communicated.

Moral education is not simply a matter of acquiring new moral precepts. Moral education also involves coming to understand how to apply those precepts to situations. Moral understanding is the capability to manipulate abstract moral precepts—to see connections between them and to be able to

employ them intelligibly with respect to concrete situations. Understanding is not simply a matter of having access to abstract propositions and concepts; it involves being able to apply them appropriately. This, of course, requires practice, and narrative artworks provide opportunities to develop, to deepen and to enlarge the moral understanding through practice.⁴

We may believe certain abstract principles—like ‘all persons should be given their due’—and possess abstract concepts—such as ‘virtue = that which promotes human flourishing’—without being able to connect these abstractions to concrete situations. For that requires not only knowing these abstractions, but understanding them. Moreover, it is this kind of understanding—particularly in terms of moral understanding—to which engaging with narrative artworks may contribute.⁵

Furthermore, since the emotions have a conceptual dimension—in virtue of possessing formal criteria concerning that which can function as the object of an emotion—it makes sense to talk about deepening or enlarging our emotional understanding. Narrative artworks promote such understanding by providing occasions for clarifying our emotions, or, as Aristotle might say, for learning to bring the right emotion to bear upon an appropriate object with suitable intensity.

So, understanding a narrative artwork may involve a simultaneous process of deepening or enlarging one’s moral understanding. And this, in turn, is an important element of moral education. Of course, learning from a narrative artwork through the enlargement of one’s moral understanding is not well described as a consequence of engaging the story. Understanding the work, enlarging one’s moral understanding and learning from the narrative are all part and parcel of the same process, which might be called comprehending or following the narrative. In reading a novel, our moral understanding is engaged already. Indeed, reading a novel is itself generally a moral activity insofar as reading narrative literature typically involves us in a continuous process of making moral judgements. Moreover, this continuous exercise of moral judgement itself contributes to the expansion and education of our moral understanding through practice.

Thus, we may speak of moral education with respect to narrative artworks without supposing that they trade in new moral discoveries or that moral education is an alien imposition on the narrative artwork. Moral education, in terms of the exercise of moral understanding, is a constituent in the appropriate mode of responding to narratives, i.e. following the story. And, if moral education is built in, so to speak, to responding to narratives, there is a straightforward way to evaluate narratives morally. Those narratives that deepen moral understanding, in the manner of, say, James’ *Ambassadors*, are, all things being equal, morally commendable, whereas those that muddy moral understanding, as does *Pulp Fiction*, which suggests that homosexual rape is much worse than murder, are morally defective. Moreover, *pace* radical

autonomism, such moral evaluations of narrative artworks are not inappropriate. Given the relation of narrative understanding to moral understanding, and the basis of that relationship in the (incomplete) nature of the narrative artwork, such evaluations are quite natural. It is not a category error to find that *Pulp Fiction*, no matter how formally compelling, is also, in certain respects, morally defective. *Pulp Fiction*, because of the kind of artwork it is, engages the moral understanding and can be assessed in terms of the efficacy of that engagement.⁶

III. MODERATE AUTONOMISM

The radical autonomist contends that all art is autonomous and takes this to entail, among other things, that discussing and evaluating art from a moral perspective is conceptually ill-founded, indeed, incoherent. I have argued that for some artworks, notably narrative artworks, this view is mistaken. For, given the nature of the narrative artwork, it is appropriate to discuss it and evaluate it morally. However, confronted by arguments like the preceding one, the autonomist may reconceive his position, conceding that some art may by its very nature engage moral understanding and may be coherently discussed and even evaluated morally. Nevertheless, the autonomist is apt to qualify this concession immediately by arguing that with such works of art, we need to distinguish between various levels of address in the object.

A given artwork may legitimately traffic in aesthetic, moral, cognitive and political value. But these various levels are independent or autonomous. An artwork may be aesthetically valuable and morally defective, or vice versa. But these different levels of value do not mix, so to speak. An aesthetically defective artwork is not bad because it is morally defective and that provides a large part of the story about why a work can be aesthetically valuable, but evil. Let us call this view moderate autonomism because, though it allows that the moral discussion and evaluation of artworks, or at least some artworks, is coherent and appropriate, it remains committed to the view that the aesthetic dimension of the artwork is autonomous from other dimensions, such as the moral dimension.⁷

The radical autonomist maintains that moral discussion and evaluation is never appropriate with respect to any artwork. The moderate autonomist maintains only that the aesthetic dimension of artworks is autonomous. This grants that artworks (at least some of them) may be evaluated morally as well as aesthetically, but contends that the moral evaluation of the artwork is never relevant to its aesthetic evaluation. The moral dimension of an artwork, when it possesses one, is strictly independent of the aesthetic dimension.

For the moderate autonomist, the narrative artwork can be divided into different dimensions of value, and, although it is permissible to evaluate such an artwork morally, the moral strengths and weaknesses of an artwork, *vis-à-vis* moral understanding, can never provide grounds for a comparable

evaluation of the aesthetic worth of an artwork. That is, an artwork will never be aesthetically better in virtue of its moral strengths, and will never be worse because of its moral defects.

On a strict reading of moderate autonomism, one of its decisive claims is that defective moral understanding never counts against the aesthetic merit of a work. An artwork may invite an audience to entertain a defective moral perspective and this will not detract from its aesthetic value. But this central claim of moderate autonomism is false.

Recall Aristotle's discussion of character in the *Poetics*.⁸ There he conjectures that for tragedy to take hold, the major character must be of a certain moral sort, if we are to pity him. He cannot be evil, because then we will regard his destruction as well deserved. The historical Hitler could not be a tragic character; his ignominious death would not prompt us to pity him. Indeed, we might applaud it. Likewise, Aristotle points out the tragic character cannot be flawless. For then when disaster befalls him we will be moved to outrage, not pity. Mother Theresa could not be a figure of tragedy, because she has no fatal flaw. The right kind of character, Aristotle hypothesizes, is morally mixed, elevated, but in other respects more like the average viewer.

If certain characters are inserted into the tragic scenario, in other words, tragedy will not secure the effects that are normatively correct for it. That is, tragedy will fail on its own terms—terms internal to the practice of tragedy—when the characters are of the wrong sort. This failure will be aesthetic in the straightforward sense that it is a failure of tragedy *qua* tragedy. And the locus of the failure may be that the author has invited the audience to share a defective moral perspective, asking us, for example, to regard Hitler as an appropriate object of pity.

A recent example of such a failure is Brett Easton Ellis' novel *American Psycho*. The author intended it as a satire of the rapacious eighties in the USA. He presented a serial killer as the symbol of the vaunted securities marketeer of Reaganomics. However, the serial killings depicted in the novel are so graphically brutal that readers are not able morally to get past the gore in order to savour the parody. Certainly, Ellis made an aesthetic error. He misjudged the effect of the murders on the audience. He failed to anticipate that the readers would not be able to secure uptake of his themes in the face of the unprecedented violence. He invited the audience to view the murders as political satire and that was an invitation they could not morally abide. His moral understanding of the possible significance of murders, such as the ones he depicted, was flawed, and he was condemned for promoting it. But that defect was also an aesthetic defect, inasmuch as it compromised the novel on its own terms. *American Psycho*'s failure to achieve uptake as satire is attributable to Ellis' failure to grasp the moral inappropriateness of regarding his serial killer as comic.

Narrative artworks are, as we have argued, incomplete structures. Among other things, they must be filled in by the moral responses of readers, viewers and listeners. Securing the right moral response of the audience is as much a

part of the design of a narrative artwork as structural components like plot complications. Failure to elicit the right moral response, then, is a failure in the design of the work, and, therefore, is an aesthetic failure. The design (the aesthetic structure) of *American Psycho* is flawed on its own terms because it rests on a moral mistake, supposing, as it does, that the sustained, deadpan, clinically meticulous dismemberments it presents to the reader could be taken in a comically detached manner. A great many of the readers of *American Psycho* reacted to the flawed moral understanding of *American Psycho*, and rejected it aesthetically. Thus, this case, along with Aristotle's observations, indicate that sometimes a moral flaw in a work can count against the work aesthetically. Therefore, moderate autonomism seems false.

Many artworks depend for their effect upon the artist's understanding the moral psychology of the audience. Where the artist fails to anticipate the moral understanding of the audience, as Ellis did, the work may fail on its own terms, which is to say in terms of its own aesthetic aims. Of course, the Ellis example is one in which large parts of the audience rejected the aesthetic contract that Ellis extended to them. They were not about to laugh at prostitutes with holes methodically drilled into their heads.

But, one might ask, what about cases where there is a defective moral perspective in a work, but the audience is not so aware of it—that is, a case where the average reader, viewer or listener buys into it. Imagine, for example, a propaganda film that treats enemy soldiers as subhuman, worthy of any amount of indignity. Here, let us suppose, most of the audience embraces the flawed moral perspective that the film promotes. Does it make sense to call the work aesthetically defective because it endorses a flawed moral perspective which is also readily adopted by the average viewer?

I suspect that it may. Because as long as the moral understanding promoted by the film is defective, it remains a potential obstacle to the film's securing the response it seeks as a condition of its aesthetic success. Audiences during the heat of war may not detect its moral defect, but after the war such a defect will become more and more evident. Movies that thrilled people may come to disgust them morally. And even if they do not disgust the majority of viewers, the films are still flawed, inasmuch as they remain likely to fail to engender the planned response in morally sensitive viewers.

Moderate autonomists overlook the degree to which moral presuppositions play a structural role in the design of many artworks. Thus, an artist whose work depends upon a certain moral response from the audience, but who has proffered a work that defies moral understanding, makes a structural, or as they say, aesthetic error. This may be one way in which to understand Hume's contention that a moral blemish in an artwork may be legitimate grounds for saying that the work is defective.⁹

Moreover, as Kendall Walton has pointed out, audiences are particularly inflexible about the moral presuppositions they bring to artworks. Whereas we are willing to grant that the physical worlds of fiction may be otherwise—

that objects can move faster than the speed of light—we are not willing to make similar concessions about morality—we are not willing to go with the notion, for example, that in the world of some fiction, killing innocent people is good. Thus, artworks that commerce in flawed moral conceptions may fail precisely because the failed moral conceptions they promote make it impossible for readers, viewers and listeners to mobilize the audience responses to which the artists aspire in terms of their own aesthetic commitments.¹⁰

But even where given audiences do not detect the moral flaws in question, the artwork may still be aesthetically flawed, since in those cases the moral flaws sit like time-bombs, ready to explode aesthetically once morally sensitive viewers, listeners and readers encounter them. That is, it need not be the case that viewers or readers actually are deterred from the response which the work invites. The work is flawed if it contains a failure in moral perspective that a morally sensitive audience could detect, such that that discovery would compromise the effect of the work on its own terms. Thus, a moral defect can count as an aesthetic defect even if it does not undermine appreciation by *actual* audiences so long as it has the counterfactual capacity to undermine the intended response of morally sensitive audiences.¹¹

That Nazis *circa* 1943 could fail to recognize morally that Hitler was not a tragic figure does not show that a play encouraging us to pity the dictator is not aesthetically ill-conceived. This may not be enough to show that a moral flaw is always an aesthetic flaw. But it is enough to show that it may sometimes be an aesthetic flaw, and that is sufficient to show that moderate autonomism is false.

Many artworks, such as narrative artworks, address the moral understanding. When that address is defective, we may say that the work is morally defective. And, furthermore, that moral defect may count as an aesthetic blemish. It will count as an aesthetic defect when it actually deters the response to which the work aspires. And it will also count as a blemish even if it is not detected – so long as it is there to be detected by morally sensitive audiences whose response to the work's agenda will be spoilt by it. A blemish is still a blemish even if it goes unnoticed for the longest time.

In response to my claim that a moral defect—such as representing Hitler as a tragic figure—counts as an aesthetic defect, the sophisticated moderate autonomist may respond that such defects might be categorized in two ways: as aesthetic defects (i.e. they present psychological problems with respect to audience uptake), or as moral problems (i.e. they project an evil viewpoint). Furthermore, the moderate autonomist may contend that all I have really offered are cases of the first type. And this does not imply that a moral problem *qua* moral problem is an aesthetic defect in an artwork. Thus, the moderate autonomist adds, it has not been shown that something is an aesthetic defect because it is evil; rather it is an error concerning the audience's psychology. Call it a tactical error.

But I am not convinced by this argument. I agree that the aesthetic defect concerns the psychology of audience members; they are psychologically incapable of providing the requisite uptake. But I am not persuaded that this failure is unconnected from the evil involved. For the reason that uptake is psychologically impossible may be because what is represented is evil. That is, the reason the work is aesthetically defective—in the sense of failing to secure psychological uptake—and the reason it is morally defective may be the same. Thus, insofar as the moderate autonomist may not be able to separate the aesthetic and moral defects of artworks across the board, moderate autonomism again seems false.

The moderate autonomist also contends that the moral merit of an artwork never redounds to its aesthetic value. Even if an artwork is of the sort where moral evaluation is legitimate, a positive moral evaluation is never relevant to an aesthetic evaluation. The positive moral evaluation is just icing on the aesthetic cake. But this seems too hasty, especially if our previous discussion of narrative art is accurate, since one of the fundamental aesthetic effects of stories—being absorbed in them, being caught up in the story—is intimately bound up with our moral responses, both in terms of our emotions and judgements.

Let us suppose that the bottom line, aesthetically speaking, with respect to narrative artworks is that we are supposed to be absorbed by them. Let us suppose that this is what authors aim at aesthetically. But if it is the purpose of the narrative artwork to absorb the audience, to draw us into the story, to capture our interest, to engage our emotions, and to stimulate our imaginations, then it should be obvious that by engaging moral judgements and emotions, the author may acquit her primary purpose by secondarily activating and sometimes deepening the moral understanding of the audience.

The autonomist is correct to say that it is not the function of the narrative artwork *per se* to provide moral education. Typically the aim of the narrative artwork is to command our attention and interest. But very frequently the narrative artwork achieves its goal of riveting audience attention and making us care about what happens next by means of enlisting our moral understanding and emotions. The author aims at drawing us into the story. But engaging the audience's moral understanding may be, and generally is, a means to this end.

Narrative art does not necessarily serve ulterior purposes like moral education. Nevertheless, this does not preclude that there may be moral learning with respect to narrative artworks. For in many instances the moral learning issues from following the narrative, in a non-accidental fashion, but rather like a regularly recurring side reaction, as the author seeks to absorb readers of the narrative by addressing, exercising and sometimes deepening our moral understandings and emotions. This need not be what the author has in the forefront of his intention, but it happens quite frequently in narratives of

human affairs where it is our moral interest in the work and our moral activity in response to the work that keeps us attentive to the object *for its own sake*.

The aesthetic appreciation of a narrative involves following the story. The more a narrative artwork encourages us to follow the story intensely, the better the narrative is *qua* narrative. I hope that I have shown that following the story involves our moral understanding and emotions. A narrative may be more absorbing exactly because of the way in which it engages our moral understanding and emotions. That is, the deepening of our moral understanding and emotions may contribute dramatically to our intense absorption in a narrative. And in such cases the way in which the narrative addresses and deepens our moral understanding is part and parcel of what makes the narrative successful.

Imagine, if you will, that Jane Austen had a twin. Let us also agree that part of what makes *Emma* absorbing is the opportunity it affords for deepening our moral understanding. The novel is better for the way in which it engages us in assessing the moral rectitude of Emma's interference with Harriet's love life. Now suppose that Jane Austen's sister wrote an alternative version of *Emma* that told the same story in the same elegant prose, but which did not address our moral understanding at all. All things being equal, I suspect that we would not find the alternative version of *Emma* as aesthetically compelling as the real Jane Austen's version. And the reason would be that it is the moral dimension of the original *Emma* that, in large measure, absorbs us, thereby enabling Jane Austen to discharge her primary goal as artist *qua* narrative author.

But if this is right, then moderate autonomism is false yet again. Sometimes it is the case that the way in which some artworks, such as narrative artworks, address moral understanding does contribute to the aesthetic value of the work. Works that we commend because of the rich moral experience they afford may sometimes, for the same reason, be commended aesthetically. This is moderate moralism. It contends that some works of art may be evaluated morally (contra radical autonomism) and that sometimes the moral defects and/or merits of a work may figure in the aesthetic evaluation of the work. It does not contend that artworks should always be evaluated morally, nor that every moral defect or merit in an artwork should figure in its aesthetic evaluation. That would amount to radical moralism, and I have no wish to defend such a view.

In conclusion, I have tried to show why with certain artworks, particularly narratives, we are naturally inclined to advert to morality when we think about and discuss them. I have attempted to defend this view by arguing that this disposition is connected to the nature of narrative. In this respect, I wish to urge that it is not a category error nor is it otherwise incoherent to talk about morality with reference to narrative artworks, given the kinds of things they are. Moreover, contra autonomism, since narrative artworks are designed

to enlist moral judgement and understanding, assessing such works in light of the moral experiences they afford is appropriate. It is not a matter of going outside the work, but rather of focusing upon it.¹²

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NOTES

¹ Moderate moralism represents a departure from an earlier position of mine which I called soft-formalism. See Noël Carroll, 'Formalism and Critical Evaluation', in Peter J. McCormick (ed.), *The Reasons of Art* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1985).

² See Clive Bell, *Art* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1924).

³ Though I have only discussed narrative artworks as a counterexample to radical autonomism, the case could be made with reference to other artforms or genres, such as portraiture.

⁴ On one view of the morally educative powers of narrative, it is supposed that audiences derive novel, general, moral propositions from texts and then they apply those propositions to the world. I agree that this is not an accurate, comprehensive account because most of the propositions derived from narratives are truisms. But this is not the picture of the educative powers of narrative that I advance. I agree that narratives generally play off the moral beliefs and emotions that we already possess and that we already employ in our intercourse with the world. However, in exercising these pre-existing moral powers in response to texts, the texts may become opportunities for enhancing our already existing moral understanding. Thus, the direction of moral education with respect to narratives is not from the text to the world by way of newly acquired moral propositions. Rather, antecedent moral beliefs about the world may be expanded by commerce with texts that enlarge our moral understanding. In stressing the world-to-text relation between moral understanding and narratives, rather

than the text-to-world relation, my position converges on the one defended by Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen in their *Truth, Fiction and Literature: A Philosophical Perspective* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

⁵ This view of moral understanding is defended at greater length in Noël Carroll, 'Art, Narrative and Morality', in Jerrold Levinson (ed.), *Aesthetics and Ethics* (Cambridge U.P. forthcoming).

⁶ See 'Art, Narrative and Morality' for further argumentation along these lines.

⁷ I am not sure that moderate autonomism is explicitly represented in the literature. I have come to construct it as a logically possible position because something like it was a common manoeuvre with which critics confronted me upon hearing the previous arguments in this paper.

⁸ Aristotle, *Poetics*, in Jonathan Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1984), vol. II, p. 2325.

⁹ David Hume, 'Of the Standard of Taste', in John W. Lenx (ed.), *Of the Standard of Taste and Other Essays* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1965), pp. 23-24.

¹⁰ See Kendall Walton, 'Morals in Fictions and Fictional Morality', in *The Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary Volume LXVIII, pp. 27-50.

¹¹ For a more powerful as well as a more elegant argument along these lines, see Berys Gaut, 'The Ethical Criticism of Art', in Jerrold Levinson (ed.), *Aesthetics and Ethics*. Gaut delivered this article as a talk at the 1994 national meeting of the American Society for Aesthetics.

¹² Earlier versions of this essay were delivered as lectures at Columbia University,

Northern Illinois University, and the University of Wisconsin at Madison. I would like to thank those audiences for their attentive criticisms. Alex Neill, Kendall Walton, Sally Banes, and Berys

Gaut have also discussed these issues with me. I have profited from the comments of all these critics. Whatever inadequacies remain in my position are my own fault, not theirs.

IN DEFENCE OF CRITICAL PLURALISM

Matthew Kieran

PHILOSOPHICAL AESTHETICS has been dominated by arguments over the nature of our interpretative engagement with artworks. Typically, the dispute concerns whether there is only one legitimate or ideal interpretation, critical monism, or whether we may interpret a work in different ways, critical pluralism. It has recently been suggested that critical monism and critical pluralism are, in principle, compatible.¹ In essence, I aim to show that *any* theory of interpretation which hopes to prove adequate must be a refined version of ordinary, everyday interpretative practice. Thus I agree that critical pluralism, significantly conceived, is both sound and incompatible with critical monism.

1. INTRODUCTION

In modern aesthetics there has been a dramatic expansion in the range of works, critical studies, and philosophical arguments concerned with interpreting art. On the whole these have been critical investigations into the significance of multifarious interpretations of particular artworks or an engagement with the interpretative process itself.² However, the presuppositions involved entail commitments to particular conceptual and normative claims and as such have been a primary focus of philosophical aesthetics. In the last couple of decades two fundamentally opposed camps have emerged. On the one hand, critical monists hold that the aim of interpretation is, in a significant sense, restricted to discovering the one true meaning of an artwork.³ One could hold this for very different reasons: one might assume that a work's meaning is determined by authorial intent or that if a work's formal features are to mean anything at all they must license only one correct interpretation. Conversely, critical pluralists hold that, necessarily, there are a number of legitimate possible interpretations of any given artwork and, moreover, that they are not themselves reducible to one underlying interpretation or ordered set of compatible interpretations.⁴ Again, one might think this for different reasons: for example, an object's meaning may be thought to depend upon the critical theory brought to bear, art's inherent ambiguity or the socio-cultural differences in values and interests of the many interpreters.

Critical pluralism initially appears to hold greater intuitive appeal, if only because it captures the nature of our pre-reflective interpretative practice. That is, over different times, performances and individuals, we commonly do

entertain divergent interpretations in relation to the same artwork. The philosophical dialectic in the last twenty years has proceeded via the delivery of counter-objections to and subsequent reformulations in various guises of the two opposed positions: yet, it would seem, no knock-down blow has been delivered. More significantly, the debate always returns to the notion that the apparent diversity of interpretation must be explicable by one underlying, single, comprehensive interpretation. Unfortunately, critical clarity has not been helped by the fact that critical analysis has tended to focus upon arguments for or against particular pluralist or monist theories. Recently, however, in classic dialectical fashion, Robert Stecker has argued that critical monism and critical pluralism are, in principle at least, wholly compatible.⁵ However, I will argue that critical pluralism, significantly conceived, can only be incompatible with critical monism.

II. CRITICAL PLURALISM AND CRITICAL MONISM

Critical pluralists hold that artworks, at least potentially, afford a plurality of possible correct interpretations open to interpreters in their engagement with them *qua* art. Furthermore, the plurality of possible interpretations cannot be ranked in relation to one another, where they may clash, according to some further higher order interpretation or interpretative principle. This is not to deny that in various circumstances we can recognize that a given interpretative principle may apply. After all, the interpretative principle of taking first or third person authorial statements as honest or authoritative should obviously apply in cases such as *Middlemarch* or *Tom Jones*. The pluralist presumption is, rather, that in certain instances we should not prioritize a certain interpretation. Hence it may be open to us to apply, say, Freudian insights in order to understand the fundamental motivations of the characters represented in a particular work. For example, in applying Freudian psychology to works such as Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* we may come to distrust the state of affairs as represented to us by the narrator internal to the work. When engaging with a particular artwork, decisions about which particular interpretation to favour rest upon judgements as to what is appropriate given the particular genre, style, characterization and particularities of the work. Such judgements not only involve the application of interpretative principles but depend upon how the spectator disambiguates aspects of the work which are irreducible to a given interpretation.

For critical monists, however, the core features of an artwork which structure our engagement with it are immutably fixed. The pre-reflective diversity of interpretations is thus held to be merely apparent. The thought is that a fully worked out interpretation will explain interpretative diversity in terms of a fundamental monistic structure. Stecker's compatibilist claim arises, he argues, because a monistic core structure may itself allow for a number of distinct possible interpretations. Thus, for example, any legitimate interpreta-

tion of the *Mona Lisa* must minimally recognize that it depicts a woman. However, it is open to the spectator, quite legitimately, to imagine that she is either smiling demurely or coldly tight lipped.⁶ Indeed on different occasions we might value seeing the *Mona Lisa* under these distinct aspects. Thus, Stecker suggests, we should be monist about the correct interpretation of certain central features of a work and pluralist about aspects which flesh them out. Furthermore, Stecker can also capture the single interpretative framework in a way which includes the specification of the possible alternatives open to the viewer in her engagement with the artwork. If sound, the compatibilist argument would certainly constitute a radical step forward in our philosophical understanding of interpretation and, furthermore, would explain why we should not expect a knock-out blow from either camp: for, presumably, both monism and pluralism contain crucial insights which can only be appropriately recognized by subsuming them under the compatibilist's more comprehensive picture.

However, through examining the compatibilist argument, we will see that such a picture inevitably fails to allow for the nature of art's ambiguity and thus the way interpreters may disambiguate artworks. For different interpretations may quite legitimately result from the fact that, in our engagement with an artwork, we may bring to bear radically different presumptions and values. Given the nature of our constructive engagement with artworks it follows that certain interpretations, and thus evaluations, are not only distinct and relative but cannot be subsumed under one comprehensive monistic interpretation. The differing presumptions brought to bear in our engagement with an artwork may not merely effect how we may legitimately construe indeterminate aspects of the artwork. Rather, they may alter the very nature of the indeterminacy involved. The fundamental features of an artwork are, in part, determined by the fundamental presumptions individual spectators or cultures bring to bear and the way the evolution of artistic conventions and art as a practice itself changes and develops.

III. THE MONISTIC AMBITION

One way the monist attempts to account for our seemingly diverse interpretative practices is by distinguishing between correctness and significance.⁷ To assess an interpretation for correctness is to examine whether it is true or not. Our interpretations, or claims made within them, can be assessed as true or false in terms of artistic intentions, the relevant art historical background, artistic conventions, norms and wider beliefs operative or presumed in relation to the artwork's production. Hence, it is sometimes claimed, to appreciate an artwork properly we should get ourselves in the mind-set of those for whom the work was made.⁸ For example, when interpreting Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein or, The Modern Prometheus*, it is clearly relevant to the novel's main theme, the aspirations of science to assume the status and power of the divine

creation of life, to consider the Prometheus story. Most people would consider Shelley's work informed by the Prometheus of Greek legend, who steals fire from the gods to console and save mankind. Prometheus's revolt against the gods, driven by a desire to benefit humankind, and his fateful destiny all resonate with Shelley's *Frankenstein*. A few might consider Mary Shelley's story in relation to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where Prometheus creates and manipulates men into life rather than just saving them, and in relation to Percy Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, where the resonant tone is of a different key: celebrating a quasi-religious election to the saviourhood of mankind. Although the tone and emphasis of such differently informed interpretations may be distinct, they may all be correct in some respect. According to the monist all such correct interpretations can, when properly construed, be conjoined into a single true interpretation.⁹ Hence the different aspects outlined are not, strictly speaking, different interpretations but partial aids and guides to *the* correct interpretation.

Different interpretations may all be true in so far as they go, but if they make no reference to other relevant aspects, they are necessarily partial. Such partial interpretations may be combined into one single comprehensive interpretation. That is, Mary Shelley combines certain aspects, $n^1 \dots n^{13}$, of the three versions of the Prometheus story. If we failed to realize this then our interpretation might be correct in so far as it goes, but, to the extent it remains incomplete, it certainly could not constitute *the* correct interpretation. The plurality of correct interpretations of a work are thus the result of partial interpretations which are subsumable under a minimal, perhaps as yet to be discovered, coherent and comprehensive interpretation.¹⁰

The critical monist can go on to emphasize that true or correct interpretations must, however, be distinguished from the wider category of acceptable interpretations. For the criteria of acceptability for significant interpretations need not be reducible to truth. Hence truth may be a necessary and sufficient condition for a correct interpretation, but only one of a cluster of conditions for interpretative acceptability: other criteria might include the recognition of a work's aesthetic value, enhancing a work's relevance to an interpreter's contemporaries or promoting its imaginative value. Thus, for example, though a production of *Hamlet* set in Gorbachov's Russia of 1991 cannot meaningfully be considered a correct interpretation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, it may be considered acceptable. For although the contemporary Russian production retains the essential story it achieves a certain kind of significance by engaging with more obviously contemporary Russian worries, interests, attitudes and ways of carrying on than an Elizabethan production would. Thus correctness is not, strictly speaking, a necessary condition of interpretative acceptability. The point of interpreting is to render the work intelligible or valuable, hence we tend to treat the value maximizing interpretation of the work as if it were the one intended by its maker.¹¹ Given that different people and cultures may have significantly different attitudes, interests and values, the

same work may license a multifarious number of incompatible but acceptable interpretations. Thus the compatibilist account of critical monism matches up to our current critical practices, which are inherently pluralist, and even allows that the different critical approaches brought to bear may result in the proliferation of apparently incompatible interpretations. However, not all the possibly significant interpretations will be compatible and thus subsumable under one overall, comprehensive interpretation. Rather, only the correct ones are. Thus critical monism appears to be compatible with and, moreover, explain critical pluralism. Presumably, according to critical monism, critical pluralists either fail to recognize, falsely, the possibility of correct interpretations or confuse correctness with interpretative significance.

IV. INTERPRETATION AND INDETERMINACY IN ART

However, critical monism remains fundamentally inadequate to the indeterminacy distinctive of art. In order to imaginatively engage with an artwork the viewer must bring to bear his own understanding, assumptions and associations.¹² Hence it is generally true that our interpretations depend upon our background theories, interests and values. But in the case of physics or biology we think it illegitimate to conclude that there are different correct interpretations of the world. Take the remarkable case of the seventeenth-century discovery of spermatozoa, which was studied, reported and illustrated using the newly developed microscope.¹³ What they 'saw' were tiny distinct homunculi: each sperm was perceived to contain a tiny fully formed man within whom there were presumably other homunculi *ad infinitum*. Obviously the scientists' theories, interests and conceptual categories were driving their perception of this new phenomena. Yet we do not hold that the phenomena of the world are thus open to a plurality of interpretations. Rather, we recognize that facts about the nature of the object determine which of the multifarious ways we may perceive an object is correct. There is a truth of the matter. Thus how we perceive an object to be may come apart from how the object actually is.

However, it is precisely a certain kind of indeterminacy which distinguishes artworks in this respect from the world. Consider works which frame or possess, internal to their structure, obvious pools of ambiguity. In the case of the *Mona Lisa* it is open to us to disambiguate her expression in various possible ways: its meaning is open to different possible senses. In attributing one of the more precise possibilities to the *Mona Lisa's* expression we aim to explore the implications for our visual and imaginative interests. Given the work's inherent ambiguity, conjoined with the individually variant interests we may bring to a work, it would seem that interpretative pluralism must hold.

Of course certain descriptions are obviously true: for example, that Bligh was the captain of the *Bounty* or that the *Mona Lisa* depicts a woman. But the nature of the events, characters' motives, actions or allegories represented

are often far from clear. Consider Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw*. A reader who values psycho-analytic explanation may look for an imaginative experience which itself reveals the complexities and unfolding force of sexual motivations and the unconscious.¹⁴ Conversely, another reader may set no store by psycho-analytic explanations at all. Thus, lacking an interest in and positive evaluation of psycho-analytic understanding, he takes the narrator's claims at face value, as, incidentally, James himself intended.

An example of a less theoretically driven divergence in interpretation might be *Jacob's Ladder*. All the cinematic cues and events portrayed are consistent with two distinct interpretations. One can imagine quite consistently that the Vietnam soldiers were subjected to deceptive and disastrous experimentation with hallucinogenic drugs to enhance their fighting capacity. Conversely, one could imagine that all the events portrayed were in fact the hallucination of a man dying in the battlefield in Vietnam. Each interpretation differs not only as to the significance of certain events portrayed, but differs as to core features of what is happening at the most basic level. Of course, at least in their own terms, both interpretations are comprehensive, simple and coherent. Which one constitutes a better interpretation thus depends upon the presumptions and imaginative understanding one brings to bear upon the film in the first place. Thus, if one brought to bear a Beckett-like understanding of the futility of human existence, meaning and knowledge, one would prefer the second interpretation. However, if one brought to bear an understanding of and concern for life as purposive, one would tend toward the former interpretation.

But ambiguity in art does not merely arise from pools which are framed and foregrounded as such by the internal structure of the work. Ambiguity also arises from the different possible contexts and interests within which a work may be produced, exhibited and engaged with. Consider, for example, J. B. Priestly's *An Inspector Calls*. It was written at the end of World War II expressly to enlist support for the Labour Party. The main interpretative theme of the play, as it was then produced, was that if everyone pulled together for the common good then British post-war society could achieve an unparalleled equality, fairness and classlessness. For thirty years or more this was considered to be the correct interpretation and the play was considered a prime exemplar of naturalistic drama. Yet several years ago Stephen Daldry produced a highly expressionistic version of the same play which was quite at odds with the previously dominant interpretation. Daldry's use of distorted scale, shadow and perspective, with the dominating houses of the landed gentry perceived only from outside, made manifest the distinct interpretation that even when exposed privilege, class, and inequality remain endemic to British society.

Of course, we do not think it acceptable or legitimate to reconstrue natural phenomena merely because our interests have changed. Hence to dismiss the

evidence for evolution just because one has undergone a religious conversion would constitute wilful self-deception. But the difference is that whether the evolutionary story is true or not is a matter wholly independent of what our interests, values and assumptions are. But, as with the Russian production of *Hamlet*, a work's meaning may take on senses distinct from previous interpretations due to the different contexts, institutions, and socio-cultural assumptions invoked in the production.

Essentially the basic thought is that the spectator's relation to the artwork is analogous to the director's relation to a play. This is not to conflate performance, which is the instantiation of a given work, with the distinct sense of critical interpretation at issue here. For a play's performance is driven by the director's critical interpretation of the play which should be both consistent with the structure laid out in the script and produces a rewarding, coherent, comprehensive experience for the spectator. But the performance itself is guided by the directorial interpretation. Similarly, but at a distinct level, the spectator's role is to disambiguate and thus interpret an artwork's meaning in such a way that it produces an imaginatively valuable experience and speaks to her own interests and values. Hence there may be interpretations of the same work which diverge over both the significance of certain events and over how under-determined aspects of the work are to be imagined. Different interpretations tend to place different emphases upon distinct passages or features of the work. Legitimate interpretations must be those which are the simplest, most coherent, comprehensive, non-contradictory and plausible interpretations of the artwork. That is, the criteria for interpretative acceptability are value dependent. If our background assumptions are relevantly different then what constitutes coherence, comprehensiveness, plausibility and makes sense of the work's value will vary. Given art's indeterminacy there can be no further questions, as there are regarding the world, as to whether the most rewarding interpretation in the light of one's interests, and consistent with the phenomena concerned, is true or not.

Now critical monism can allow for differences which are wholly consistent with the possibility of an overarching explanation; an absolute interpretation which includes any two or more partial readings, in the light of which they would no longer be seen to be contradictory. However, divergences over how indeterminacies are disambiguated, arising from bringing relevantly different associations and understandings to bear, cannot wholly admit of such an overarching interpretation. Even assuming different understandings agree about the salient features of a work, the insights of feminist, Freudian, Marxist or Leaviste interpretations of D. H. Lawrence, for example, cannot all be incorporated into one minimal absolute interpretation. Thus one may not even be able to argue as to whether the women in *The Fox* are both lesbians, or perhaps not even come to an agreement as to whether the question is relevant or not. The spectator's constructive imaginative engagement does

not just supervene upon and grip onto the fundamental structure prescribed and wholly determined by the artwork. That is, our spectatorial imaginative engagement does not merely flesh out the artist's work. For our imaginative engagement necessarily brings to bear our own understandings, private and public, which enable us to engage with the work in the first place.

Fundamentally different understandings brought to bear may lead to differences in what is to be imagined. Of course, mere difference does not entail divergence. The presumed understandings brought to bear must be relevantly different, before what are taken to be the centrally relevant features or under-determined aspects of the artwork may radically differ. Thus there may be a multiplicity of legitimate interpretations, depending upon the different relevant assumptions that may be brought to bear upon a work *and* cohere with it. It is important to realize that I am not using incompatibility in the sense that the interpretations contradict one another. Indeed, interpretations which are divergent in this more radical sense are, strictly speaking, compatible. This is because, effectively, the validity of the interpretations are relativized to the background assumptions brought to bear. Thus the psycho-analytic interpretation and the Jamesian one are not even rivals. There is no common standard by which we can compare them, thus they cannot meaningfully disagree with each other. Therefore, there can be no contradiction.

The advantages of a pluralist account of interpretation should be obvious. First, it fits in nicely with our actual common-sense interpretative practice. For our interpretations of artworks typically do diverge over time, individuals and cultures. Secondly, critical pluralism can properly account for just why it is that artworks, at least good ones, are inexhaustible. Engaging with artworks is an open-ended activity precisely because one may come back to a work time and time again and, through shifts in one's interpretation, be rewarded by subtly distinct experiences. Moreover, the interpretative activity itself is valued precisely because a work's indeterminacies may be disambiguated in relation to distinct contexts, institutions and forms of life. The point of interpretation is to imaginatively vivify the work's meaning in relation to our interests and concerns. Hence interpretation is, in a significance sense, forward looking.

Once the spectator's particular, constructive contribution is admitted it cannot be wholly restricted to pools of ambiguity autonomously framed by the artwork itself. Our imaginative engagement does not merely reveal a work's correct core structure. Rather, the very nature of the work's core structure may itself depend upon the assumptions and imaginative understandings we bring to bear upon it. Thus, where the pools of ambiguity in a work collect depends not just upon the structure of the work itself but also upon the spectator. Of course, it does not follow from this that one cannot misinterpret an artwork. We may hold both that different understandings may legitimize different interpretations and, nonetheless, that a work may determinately

prescribe us to imagine something. The possibility of misinterpretation remains.

V. CRITICAL PLURALISM DEFENDED

Critical monists, of course, will argue that their position remains adequate to the line of thought just outlined. First, even assuming artworks are significantly indeterminate in a way reality is not, critical monists would claim we can still achieve one overall, comprehensive interpretation. After all, if differing interpretations' acceptability depend upon the relevant beliefs underlying a particular disambiguating interpretation then the distinct interpretations are not, strictly speaking, incompatible. Hence, as we saw in the case of *Jacob's Ladder*, we can specify the possible interpretations and the relevant beliefs which render them so. Of course, a single comprehensive interpretation may well be more complex than we typically presume such an overarching interpretation should be. This flows from the fact that each possible acceptable interpretation would have to be specified, in part, in relation to the relevant beliefs, prejudices and understandings which render it acceptable. Nonetheless, a single comprehensive interpretation, which includes the disjunctive specification of alternative mutually incompatible construals, remains, at least in principle, possible.

However, even were it to remain a theoretical possibility, such a single interpretation would be so infinitely complex as to be singularly useless. Yet, I take it, the point of critical monism is to assert that a single interpretation is the correct one and as such should be grasped in order to constrain our interpretative activities. But if the single interpretation is so complex as to be beyond human reach, then the point and purpose of critical monism is surely rendered otiose. The theoretical possibility is thus maintained at the expense of evacuating it of all practical significance. More significantly, however, such a single interpretation cannot be a theoretical possibility precisely because it cannot determinately capture all the interpretative possibilities open to the spectator. Given that the interpretative possibilities are multiply ambiguous and hence partly determined by the beliefs and presumptions brought to bear, the interpretative possibilities must remain under-specified and thus inherently open. Hence they cannot be comprehensively captured by any one single interpretation.

A second move open to critical monists is to claim that though interpretative pluralism promotes valuable experiences with artworks, it does not follow that all the multiple disambiguations of a work's meanings are legitimate. After all, it does not necessarily follow from the fact that different people bring different understandings to bear upon an artwork, that any resulting interpretation is acceptable. The different assumptions brought to bear may themselves be of socio-cultural interest. But the fact that they are brought to bear cannot, of itself, legitimize their application. Rather, we should seek to

demarcate what the legitimate understanding is that we can bring to bear in order to detect the work's meaning.

The basic point is that we cannot do just anything to the work in order to cultivate audience interest: for example, assessing *Crime and Punishment* on the basis of its book cover. For our value enhancing interpretations must still be of the work in question, and thus, for example, still fundamentally constrained and prescribed by the work's essential narrative and themes. Of course, it may well be that misinterpretations of a work are more cognitively interesting than correct interpretations. Nonetheless, imaginative interest does not, of itself, legitimize an interpretation as correct. Hence, in relation to James' *The Turn of the Screw*, we should ask whether a Freudian understanding of humanity is itself warranted. If, as some would suggest, Freudianism is an absurdly reductionist model for understanding human actions, then it cannot be acceptable to bring it to bear upon our interpretation of James' story. Of course, someone might contest such an evaluation of Freudianism. They may think that it can be shown, or at least remains an open matter, as to the adequacy of Freudianism to human understanding and motivation. However, even if true, the fundamental point remains.

Now one possible retort to these claims might assert that what is true of the human world is itself radically relative to the form of self-understanding we possess or the model we bring to bear upon it.¹⁵ However, one need not be committed to such an implausibly strong claim to see that the critical monist's response is flawed. That is, one may accept that Freudianism is itself inadequate as a wholesale explanation in understanding human actions and yet hold that a Freudian interpretation of *The Turn of the Screw* may be as legitimate as the Jamesian one. The value of our interpretative engagement with artworks is not just a matter of truth. After all, an interpretation may be, comparatively speaking, more adequate to our human world but less valuable than another possible interpretation, because, for example, the latter may afford more vivid imaginings, a novel perspective, extends or initiates new artistic conventions and so on. Consider the same point in relation to our evaluations of philosophical works. Typically we value philosophical works not just because we think the arguments suggested are warranted. Cognitive value is not co-extensive with truth narrowly construed. Rather, amongst other things, we also value originality, philosophical insight and dexterity.

In the case of *The Turn of the Screw*, though we may not believe actual human motivation is fundamentally Freudian, it may prove of great imaginative interest and value to entertain the possibility in relation to this particular story. Hence, not only may the narrative tension be enhanced and our imaginings rendered more complex, the imaginative understanding promoted, though not fundamentally true of all human action, may yet cultivate insight into particular, contingent human motivations. Thus one may be able to see

more clearly how, in our world, particular roles and relationships may be driven by sexual imperatives and the lust for or denial of power and potency. Therefore the Freudian interpretation, though engaging with imaginative possibilities which do not generally hold true of our world, may yet, indirectly, promote insight into particular cases or motivations which are sexual in nature. The enhancement of the work's imaginative complexity in this way legitimizes this particular interpretation.

Thus the indeterminacy of art allows interpretative pluralism to flourish within constraints. Hence sophisticated pluralists can allow for better and worse or legitimate and illegitimate interpretations. After all, as with the *Crime and Punishment* example, an interpretation may fail to cohere with or explain much of what we may descriptively assert as true of the artwork. An interpretation is an attempt to make sense of an artwork's materials, formal elements, expressive aspects, cognitive content, narrative and the various interrelationships therein. As such the interpretation is necessarily constrained by the way the work is structured. Thus, at a relatively low level of description, we can say that any interpretation of the *Mona Lisa* must appropriately recognize that a woman is depicted. If this is the right descriptive claim then it is unalterably true and not open to dispute: hence it is not an interpretative matter.¹⁶ Rather, as Annette Barnes has pointed out, interpretative questions arise only where there can be legitimate puzzlement.¹⁷ We cannot merely look harder to see if the *Mona Lisa* is really smiling and thus aim for the one correct description. There is no truth of the matter: we may interpret her as smiling serenely or pouting sullenly.

An interpretation, as distinct from a mere description, may possess the semantic mark of the truth but is not, strictly speaking, either true or false but more or less acceptable. Thus, unsurprisingly, there may be many acceptable ways of disambiguating what is descriptively true of a particular work. Whether an interpretation is acceptable depends upon whether the interpretation proffered is consistent with the appropriate low-level descriptions of the work, whether it renders the artist's intentionally guided actions and the nature of the work before us intelligible and, lastly, whether it honours the point of the interpretative practice in engaging and promoting the work's imaginative value. For the point of art's indeterminacies, and thus the spectator's disambiguating role, is to promote imaginatively fruitful ways of engaging with the work concerned and to enhance insight into our human condition. For the acceptability of an interpretation, where we go beyond mere description, depends upon the coherent imaginative value proffered to us in engaging with the artwork concerned under a particular interpretation. If it is imaginatively superficial or impoverishing, though consistent with the description of the work concerned, it is an unacceptable interpretation.

What constitutes acceptability and what is itself of value in part depends upon the very presumptions we bring to bear in our engagement with the

artwork. This is not to make the far too quick move of saying all truth is itself relative to the form of understanding brought to bear. However, as suggested, warrantability, at least in interpreting art, is not reducible just to questions of truth. An interpretation may be warranted if it enhances imaginative cognitive value in other ways. The indeterminacies of art are open to disambiguation on the part of the spectator in multifarious ways. The point of interpretation is to provide an imaginatively rich experience which affords pleasure, interest and insight to the socially situated individual. Hence art, and the activity of interpretation, is a form of imaginative conversation which gives rise to many different voices rather than a critical contest in which there is one winner and many losers. All of which would suggest, *pace* critical monists, that a certain kind of interpretative pluralism is unavoidable.¹⁸

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NOTES

¹ Robert Stecker, 'Art Interpretation', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (1994), pp. 193–206. See also Stecker's contrast of his own position with that of Joseph Margolis in his 'Relativism about Interpretation', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (1995), pp. 14–18.

² The past twenty years alone have seen a radical proliferation in the number of critical works concerned with particular artworks, from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to Franz Kafka's *The Trial*, and the kinds of interpretative theories brought to bear upon them, from formalism and feminism to deconstruction and reader-response criticism.

³ Critical monists range from the traditionalist E. D. Hirsch Jr, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1967) to the more radical Alexander Nehamas, 'The Postulated Author: Critical Monism as a Regulative Ideal', *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1981), pp. 133–49, and his 'Writer, Text, Work, Author' in A. J. Cascardi (ed.), *Literature and the Question of Philosophy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U.P., 1987), pp. 265–91.

⁴ Critical pluralists, for whom there are a multiplicity of interpretative criteria, include Annette Barnes' *On Interpretation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), Wayne C. Booth, *The Company We Keep* (Berkeley: University of

California Press, 1988), Stanley Fish, *Is There A Text In This Class?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U.P., 1980), and Joseph Margolis, *The Truth About Relativism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991).

⁵ Robert Stecker, 'Art Interpretation', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (1994), pp. 193–206.

⁶ See E. H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, 14th edn (Oxford: Phaidon, 1984), pp. 227–9, where he talks of Leonardo's deliberate use of *sfumato* to allow the spectator's imagination to play.

⁷ Although Stecker distinguishes between correctness and significance as far as I know this kind of distinction was first invoked by E. D. Hirsch in his *Validity in Interpretation* (Y.U.P., 1976).

⁸ See Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1972), especially the claims in Chapter 2, Section 3, pp. 36–40, for a sustained attempt to do just that, and Anthony Savile's *The Test of Time* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1982), p. 64, for a similar claim.

⁹ See Robert Stecker, 'Art Interpretation', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (1994), p. 200, and E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (Yale U.P., 1976).

- ¹⁰ Simon Blackburn, *Spreading the Word* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1984), pp. 199–201, presumes, falsely I am inclined to think, that this is the lesson to be derived from Hume's essay 'Of the Standard of Taste'.
- ¹¹ See Alexander Nehamas, 'The Postulated Author. Critical Monism as a Regulative Ideal', *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1981), pp. 133–49.
- ¹² See E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1977), Ch. IX, pp. 250–254, for arguments against the notion of an innocent eye, and R. L. Gregory, *Eye and Brain*, 3rd edn (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1990). Gregory argues that the visual system seeks to organize our sensate experience into a meaningful whole by constructing and testing hypotheses, based on probability, against the thus apparent structure of the world.
- ¹³ Cited in Peter Fuller's *Beyond the Crisis in Art* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative Society, 1981), Chapter IV, p. 222.
- ¹⁴ See G. Willen (ed.), *A Casebook on Henry James's The Turn of the Screw and Other Tales*, 2nd edn. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1969), which includes, amongst other interpretations, Edmund Wilson's 'The Ambiguity of Henry James', pp. 115–53.
- ¹⁵ See, for example, Richard Rorty's *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1989).
- ¹⁶ Interestingly enough there is a line of interpretation which holds that 'she' may, in fact, be Leonardo's male lover. Hence even such apparently fundamental givens may be open to dispute and may thus be interpretation laden.
- ¹⁷ See Annette Barnes, *On Interpretation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988).
- ¹⁸ An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Rocky Mountain Division of the American Society for Aesthetics, Santa Fe, July 1995, and the Annual Conference of the American Society for Aesthetics, St Louis, November 1995. I would like to thank all those present for their comments and, in particular, Leon Surette, Berys Gaut, Peter Lamarque and Robert Stecker.

PROBLEMS IN THE DEFINITION OF CRITICISM

Philip Smallwood

I

THIS ESSAY does not, and could not for reasons which I hope will become clear, define criticism. Its concern mirrors W. W. Robson's essay, 'The Definition of Literature': to consider rather 'what *kind* of definition is most likely to be useful'.¹ But this statement in turn presupposes that one or another 'kind' of definition of the thing in question is at least possible. In the case of criticism, our central problem—the situation which makes identifying any definition of criticism at once so necessary and yet so elusive—will be obvious to any reader of modern literary criticism. It is that the pervasive idiom of one 'kind' of criticism—the post-structuralist—makes discussing the issue *except* in post-structuralist terms appear simply absurd, a naïve and ignorant *faux pas*. This central problem is not open to solution: it is a necessary risk going with acceptance that the word 'criticism' is part of the currently usable non-specialist vocabulary of English and that the existence of 'post-structuralist criticism' is one comprehensible instance of use.

But what counts as a definition of criticism can be examined. It is open to examination in two possible ways. The first might be the clearing away of all those statements, formulations, approaches and so forth which *prima facie* do not comply with the conditions we decide should govern the definition of something. I have in mind here all the kinds of utterances on criticism that easily pass for definitive remarks, and give us some of the satisfaction we associate with definitions (finality, comprehensiveness, etc.), but do not do the job that we are asking definitions to do—because it is in their nature as utterances not to. This is the business of the present essay.

A further stage—analysing the relations between 'criticism proper'—and other concepts (not criticism) that are commonly confused with it—goes beyond the scope of this essay; but it needs to be mentioned in connection with the context and purpose of what takes place here. It would not be enough to say (with John M. Ellis, for example) that the concept of criticism is 'an inherently confused one' where 'conceptual analysis will only expose, not

resolve the confusion'.² If the concept is confused, and the confusions are exposed, the user would be better armed to evade them and usage would become clearer. The exposure of confusions is the first stage in their elimination. If, however, the confusions are inherent in the sense that it is impossible to have criticism without them, then we would have to say that criticism was another name for confusion. When we used the word 'criticism' it would be a sense of confusion we called up.

In speaking of 'criticism proper' this is not to say that the definition in order to be clear needs to be esoteric, rare or specialized in some way. We are not concerned to boil down 'criticism' to some core meaning that nobody uses and which could not be useful. We are interested in 'criticism' in its ordinary acceptance, as it is used by speakers and writers of the English language who expect to be understood in conversations and writing containing the word. We are not interested in its status as a technical term, as when for example we encounter for the first time the term '*différance*', or 'signification' in transliterated structuralist criticism, or 'base' and 'superstructure' in Marxist, and want the meaning explained. Our problem is that while 'criticism' is a word in common usage, the usage is equivocal or ambiguous. There are different usages that do not always announce themselves as different. The aim would not be to fix on a central usage at the expense of all the ways that the word 'criticism' is used, and to leave these out of account, to kill them off. It would be to keep these in play, as part of the totality of meaning, but to recognize their distinctiveness. The meaning of any word, as R. G. Collingwood pointed out in seeking to define 'art', is constantly sliding off in any number of different directions:

The proper meaning of a word ... is never something upon which the word sits perched like a gull on a stone; it is something over which the word hovers like a gull over a ship's stern. Trying to fix the proper meaning in our minds is like coaxing the gull to settle in the rigging, with the rule that the gull must be alive when it settles: one must not shoot it and tie it there.

Collingwood went on to suggest that the way to this 'proper meaning' was not to ask what we mean, but "'What are we trying to mean?'"': 'And this involves the question "What is preventing us from meaning what we are trying to mean?"'³ To use the word 'criticism'—according to this formula—is thus constantly to do battle with a barrage of distractions, wandering meanings which are all the time tending to divert us from meaning what we are trying to mean. What we are trying to mean by 'criticism' is obstructed and impeded by all the other concepts that adjoin it jostling for attention and recognition. Thus criticism may not be the same thing as, say, history. But we can have historical criticism, and the historical study of criticism, where criticism is understood as a branch of the study of history. Likewise, criticism may differ from biography (many though not all biographies are about

writers). And there is then the question of whether biography is necessary or sufficient for criticism, or even desirable within it (many have argued for an outright ban). Similar rules apply to the position of psychology, ethics, autobiography, philosophy, linguistics, cultural studies, art in general, science in general, etc. The problem also applies to criticism's relation to such interdisciplinary concepts as theory or interpretation, and to the object of the kind of criticism we call literary criticism, literature itself. It was the confusion inherent in this last concept which critics have themselves sought to resolve, and which led I. A. Richards to explain why criticism did appear confused:

If the definition of a poem is a matter of so much difficulty and complexity, the discussion of the principles by which poetry should be judged may be expected to be confused. Critics have as yet hardly begun to ask themselves what they are doing or under what conditions they work.⁴

As I have suggested at the beginning, it is not a purpose of this essay to work to produce a definition of criticism and it could not be. However, in considering the grounds for any definition, we do not have to start from the position that criticism cannot be defined, that a definition is impossible. If we start from the position that criticism is impossible to define then we are forced into a logical track which insists that nothing is meant by the word, or that it is so *completely* ambiguous, and means so many different things to so many different people, that the concept has effectively collapsed. This part-nihilistic, part-pluralistic dead end—sometimes known as 'post-modernism'—is exceptionally common; but it is usually adopted prematurely in reaction to some form of inadequate definition (or contested proposition), or a definition of a certain form where no obvious substitute form springs to mind on the same occasion.

This is, I would argue, an unwarrantably extreme position, though it may result, understandably, from bewilderment at the sheer number of general statements on the nature of criticism which seem to contradict each other, and is a natural reaction to the polarized voices of modern criticism, languages constructed to deny the very existence of the concept of common understanding and common speech. A distinction can, however, be drawn between cases of this kind, and what seems to arise on the famous occasion of F. R. Leavis' protest against attempts by philosophical thinkers to pin down criticism explicitly to certain principles and theories. Leavis felt that such thinkers had missed the essence of criticism; that criticism had to be 'defined' (he uses the word only in inverted commas) in the form of an implication derived from specific practice. Leavis' 'definition of criticism' was implicit in (and a tacit inference derived from) how he went about criticizing the authors and works that he did:

I stand, then, by my account of *Four Quartets*. I stand also by my contention that 'English' should be a *liaison-centre*, and that, in the 'co-presence' needed to make

it that, no discipline of thought is more important than the philosophical to that quite different one, the essence of which I have tried in my book, with inevitable clumsiness, to 'define'. I hoped to get accepted among members of a small philosophical élite that the 'defining' can't be done with philosophical cogency. That, of course, involves some such avowal as the following. I should have been encouraged if Tanner could have been brought to see that it is not mere 'serendipity' in me to insist on recommending 'English' students to read Polanyi's essay, 'The Logic of Tacit Inference'.⁵

Without having to accept that Leavis' personal practice as a critic does, in fact, define criticism (a proposition that many would now regard as outrageous), it should not be necessary to assume at the same time that the conditions required for the most useful, tenable definition of criticism are the conditions required of a formal statement, any kind of explicit account or catch-all formula in which a definition of criticism is *intended*. If the criticism we are interested in is the criticism of literature, and if literature is widely regarded as a channel for suggestion, intuition and evocation, the probabilities might conceivably point in a decidedly different direction. But then defining literature seems part of the problem of defining criticism, and there is no taking for granted that literature is defined in this way. The 'culturalization' of criticism has ensured that.

But why would anyone want a definition of criticism (of any kind) and who would want it? A definition of criticism would be useful, at the present time, in any attempt to understand what it is that we think we are doing—at a time when, as we have seen earlier, the remnants of the *communis criticorum* give the appearance of unprecedented disagreement about this. The search for a definition of criticism is one of the ways that the subject investigates itself, renews itself by reminding itself, and re-instates its bounds and limits as they have become overgrown and subject to dispute. From a different perspective, many or most new students of English literature find it impossible to discover what is supposed to be happening when reading a work of criticism, and thus find it impossible to determine what, as critics, they themselves are supposed to be doing. And then there are the writers of all the works of literature themselves. Does criticism still have something to do with them? A definition might reveal this. Here I do not assume that the kind of definition likely to be thought of help to anyone is the kind requiring the meaning and nature of criticism to be simply spelt out, as a creed, or dogma or checklist (for the reasons suggested above). I merely presuppose that it will always be useful to know more about the kind of problem the defining of criticism is, and that it is a problem. If criticism proves incapable of giving an account of itself to people outside criticism (reflective people in general, physicists, historians, new students of literature or whoever) then such people should know that, and should be privy to the reasons. Individuals can then decide for themselves how seriously or lightly they think criticism needs to be taken; and whether it can be taken seriously at all. This is a major consideration—

given the quantity of human time that is currently devoted to criticism's study, and the general conviction that the study of criticism constitutes a 'field'. Where, then, are the fences? Or are the divisions only internal?

One curiosity of such an enquiry is its circular form: it has to be criticism of some kind which conducts the search to define criticism. Another is the fact that in order to approach a definition of criticism we seem to have to know what it is in the first place. The idea of criticism, according to the Collingwoodian definition of art, has to be already there in our heads. The definition, once encountered, then 'rings true' as we say. The assumption of this essay is that we all do know what criticism is, precisely enough, and that when we use the word we do not *mean* to invoke a confusion, much less a non-entity, non-existent until it is defined. Nor, even when the disagreements are greatest, are we not understood because we are using the equivalent of a foreign language term. Our problem is not the absence of facts: all the facts about criticism we need lie open before us (they are there in all the 'texts', ancient and modern, that we call 'criticism', whether or not we think such criticism has worth); nor is it that we do not know what we are trying to say: our problem is that we cannot quite put what we know into words. And that is the essence of the difference between the 'proper meaning' of criticism whose conditions for definition are open to enquiries of this kind and the nature of a technical term. No simple act of translation will do. The problem will not be solved by a paraphrase; the conversion of meaning from one medium to another.

II

Let us begin, however, by recording three ways in which criticism tries for, in a sense achieves, and in a sense evades definition. It is not completely defined by statements of the following very common kinds: (1) accounts of its function; (2) accounts of its categories and types; (3) statements of the form: 'Criticism is ...'

We can now consider these in order, and in more detail.

I. 'THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM'

To speak of the 'function of criticism' implies an awareness, within the elements of the situation of criticism, of a distinction between means and ends. We may think of how criticism is a means to an end if we think of the sense in which it assists a reader in gaining a clearer idea of a literary text, explanatory or interpretative. But theories of the function of criticism differ widely in their conceptions of the end or ends that criticism should have. A scrapbook of extracts taken from the writings of critics on criticism over the last hundred or so years would probably have to include the following diverse, if not plain contrary, convictions. All represent answers of some kind to the implied question: 'what is the critic (or criticism) for?'

(i) '... to try to know the best that is known and thought in the world, irrespectively of practice, politics, and everything of the kind ...' (Matthew Arnold, 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time', 1864);⁶

(ii) '... to make a beginning for that more free speculative treatment of things ...' (Matthew Arnold);⁷

(iii) '... the elucidation of works of art and the correction of taste.' (T. S. Eliot, 'The Function of Criticism', 1923);⁸

(iv) '...to forerun composition, to serve as a gunsight ...' (Ezra Pound, 'Date Line', 1934);⁹

(v) 'Excernment. The general ordering and weeding out of what has actually been performed. The elimination of repetitions.' (Ezra Pound);¹⁰

(vi) 'The business of the literary critic is to attain a peculiar completeness of response and to observe a peculiarly strict relevance in developing his response into commentary; he must be on his guard against abstracting improperly from what is in front of him and against any premature or irrelevant generalizing—of it or from it.' (F. R. Leavis, *The Common Pursuit*, 1952).¹¹

(vii) 'The role of the contemporary critic is to resist that dominance [of mass-media commodification of the public sphere] by re-connecting the symbolic to the political, engaging through both discourse and practice with the process by which repressed needs, interests and desires may assume the cultural forms which could weld them into a collective political force.' (Terry Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism*, 1984).¹²

But all these statements have in common the view that criticism, whatever else it may be, is definable as a means. When we use the word 'criticism' in this functionalist theory what we mean to say is that criticism is the thing (the means) which leads to or produces another (quite different) thing (a completeness of response, a clear experience in the mind of the reader, a more civilized and sensitive society, a politically conscious and literate population, and so on and so forth), and is then left behind when its purpose is served. The function of criticism, like a function in mathematics, is whatever it is constituting the value on which criticism's own value depends. T. S. Eliot is adopting a functionalist theory when he writes that criticism 'must always profess an end in view'.¹³

We can try to suggest that criticism is 'defined by its function'.¹⁴ But for this to be true we would have to be sure that the end of criticism (a better society, clearer ideas in the reader's mind, etc.) was only achieved when criticism provided the means; when criticism and only criticism was the special kind of activity proper to the realization of these things. And it clearly is not; any more than 'a vehicle for getting from A to B' defines a car by its function when there is always the possibility of going by train. Not only are the ends proposed for criticism very different indeed; the achievement of ends by means allows for the possibility of different means. Thus 'a clearer idea of the poem (say) in the reader's mind' need not be the effect of the reader having

benefited at any point from a critical exposition of the poem: it might, for example, be the effect of the same person reading the poem again in a completely different, refreshed frame of mind, or coming back to the poem after having read other poems, or other poets. Likewise, criticism is not the exclusive means by which it is possible to achieve the end of enhancing the political consciousness of society. Literature itself can do that, as the poetry of Dryden, Shelley, Wordsworth and Bob Dylan have all at different times shown. So can political speeches. We can of course say that achieving such ends is one of the ways in which poems and political speeches may function as criticism: they are 'criticism' *in that respect*. But criticism is defined by its function in this regard only when other factors in the situation are fixed.

2. CRITICISM BY CATEGORY AND TYPE

The basis of this approach to defining criticism is to see criticism as the sum of its divisible parts, as a composite of its differentiae, as the logicians might say. In this case criticism exists as a kind of protean being—or a monster with many heads. Again, by turning to the criticism of the last hundred or so years we can see that there are various ways in which this creature divides. It is possible, for example, to specify, adjectivally, different 'types' or 'categories' of critic, as T. S. Eliot does in his essay 'To Criticize the Critic' (1961):

First of all among those types of critics other than mine, I should put down the Professional Critic — the writer whose literary criticism is his chief, perhaps his only title to fame .

Second, I name the Critic with Gusto. This critic is not called to the seat of judgement; he is rather the advocate of the authors whose work he expounds, authors who are sometimes the forgotten or unduly despised ...

Third, the Academic and the Theoretical I mention these two together, as they can overlap, but this category is perhaps too comprehensive, since it ranges from the purely scholarly . to the philosophical critic ...¹⁵

Here the effort is to define criticism by drawing defining lines between its family varieties. A slightly different technique was used by Ezra Pound in 'Date Line' (1934). Here the critic tries to pin down criticism in terms of divisions corresponding to genres, or formal types of expression, within criticism itself. The result is a kind of menu—the same dish with different flavours and fillings:

Criticism has at least the following categories, differing greatly in the volume of their verbal manifestation, and not equally zoned.

1. Criticism by discussion, extending from mere yatter ... up to the clearly defined record of procedures ...
2. Criticism by translation
3. Criticism by exercise in the style of a given period ...
4. Criticism via music, meaning definitely the setting of a poet's words ...

This is the most intense form of criticism save.

5. Criticism in new composition.¹⁶

Such setting forth of criticism in, as it were, its component parts, is not confined to creative writers: such writers might have special reasons to want to keep criticism in its place. There are, for example, the rubrics used by the scholar and aesthete Northrop Frye in his *magnum opus*, the *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957). Frye seeks here what he hopes will be 'a comprehensive view of criticism',¹⁷ and this he does by reference to immense general categories which go by the names of 'Historical Criticism', 'Ethical Criticism', 'Archetypal Criticism', 'Rhetorical Criticism', etc. Much subsequent critical scholasticism has followed similar lines. A more recent version of this practice of critical typing can be found in the semi-historical, semi-doctrinal divisions you find in almost all modern introductions to literary theory designed for newcomers to the 'field' of critical studies: Russian formalism, structuralism, post-structuralism, feminism, etc.¹⁸ Such studies reflect two important trends in the implicit definition of criticism: (i) the 'category-mistake' in which criticism has come to be seen as entirely defined in terms of its theories, and (ii) the success of an essentially descriptivist, non-evaluative typology as a suitable medium for the introductory discussion of criticism.

In each of these cases criticism can be seen as the total of a sort of addition sum: $X (= \text{criticism}) = a + b + c + d$ and so forth, where a, b, c , etc. correspond with 'professional' and 'academic', say, in Eliot's breakdown, 'X by discussion' and 'X by translation' in Pound's, or 'historical' and 'ethical' in Frye's. The 'critic proper' is thus the additive result of, say, the 'professional', the 'academic', etc., while 'criticism proper' may be regarded as the gathering of a number of sub-divisions, or 'approaches': liberal humanist, Marxist, feminist, structuralist, post-structuralist, and so on, whichever the individual writer on criticism happens to choose as the appropriate set. Totting up the elements then gives you criticism.

The problem here is this: while the differentiae of the definition are specified, the genus is not. It is not to define criticism to say, in effect, that it is that which has 'discussion', 'translation', 'an exercise in style', 'music', and 'new composition' as its types, because the genus (the general class of things to which all these attach) is missing. Moreover, to continue in this somewhat harshly logical vein, the differentiae are all shared with concepts other than criticism. They are accidental not essential attributes of the concept's referents, symptoms, not part of the defining criterion. Thus it is not only possible to have a 'professional' cricketer, an 'academic' administrator (to again use T. S. Eliot's breakdown) where the attributes can be linked with perfect sense to referents that have nothing whatsoever to do with what we are trying to mean when we use the word 'criticism'; the *same* combination of attributes applicable to 'criticism' could apply equally to the definition of 'art'.

The consequence is an array not a totality. We are made aware of the attributes which go to compose criticism but not the unique, irreplicable sense in which they are related to make criticism something distinct, a concept in its own right. The approach to defining criticism satisfies the analytic demand of a definition—that it should enhance our insight into the components of a concept. But it also works to deny the respect in which to define something is to achieve a focus, a condensation, a confirmation that the totality is only the sum of the attributes specified and nothing else. If criticism is to be defined by the identification and naming of differentiae minus a genus, the division must take place without a remainder. But the elements into which criticism is divided here give no guarantee that this is the case. They can come together to make something other than criticism, or something less. Pound's 'at least' seems to recognize this.

A similar problem has to be confronted in accounts of critical writing containing the formulation 'The critic as ...' or 'Criticism as', e.g. 'The Critic as Artist' (Oscar Wilde), 'Criticism as Language' (Roland Barthes). Such accounts may be seen as trying to move criticism's definition in one preferred direction or another. Their possibilities have no end. In this respect they share the character of statements of the form 'Criticism is ...'.

3. CRITICISM IS ...

Statements of the form 'criticism is ...' are exceptionally frequent in the literature of criticism and provide an account of criticism in what is probably the most commonly accepted definitional format: 'Hypocrisy is the tribute that vice pays to virtue'; 'Love is ...'; 'Happiness is ...', etc. We may think of these statements, in the case of criticism, as straight answers to the kind of straight question that has often been posed of art, of poetry, of literature, and of criticism itself: the question 'What is ...?' Unlike statements on the function of criticism considered above, the genus of the definition is perfectly explicit in this case. The grammar of the answer is controlled by the grammar of the question. It rests on the verb 'to be'. And so we find remarks such as these, from:

(i) T. S. Eliot:

...the true generalization is not something superimposed upon an accumulation of perceptions; the perceptions do not, in a really appreciative mind, accumulate as a mass, but form themselves as a structure; and criticism is the statement in language of this structure; it is a development of sensibility [my emphasis].¹⁹

(ii) Northrop Frye:

Criticism ... is to art what history is to action and philosophy to wisdom: a verbal imitation of a human productive power which in itself does not speak ... If criticism is a science, it is clearly a social science ...²⁰

(iii) Harold Bloom:

Criticism is the discourse of the deep tautology—of the solipsist who knows that what he means is right, and yet that what he says is wrong. Criticism is the art of knowing the hidden roads that go from poem to poem.²¹

(iv) Clive James:

Criticism is not a science ... Criticism is simply a talent, like any other talent.²²

(v) Edward W. Said:

... criticism ... is an academic thing, located for the most part far away from the questions that trouble the reader of a daily newspaper.²³

Such remarks are like epigrams, apothegms, *bons mots* or *aperçus*. They sound an oracular note that is perfectly designed to create the impression that it is possible to clear up the mystery of criticism's essential identity once and for all. 'Criticism in short', writes Edward W. Said, 'is always situated; it is skeptical, secular, reflectively open to its own failings.'²⁴ Pithiness is everything in such comments. They do not lack the focus, the condensing power, we demand of the definition. But the nature of such statements, as John M. Ellis has discussed in his essay 'The Logic of the Question: "What is Criticism?"', is that they are normative. They are, that is, unsatisfactory in the sense that they do not exclude the truth of other, different, statements of the same kind – as the above very various and sometimes directly contrary examples show. This is because they are not truly 'once and for all' definitions of criticism so much as propositions, statements of personal conviction about what criticism is; they reflect what the person forming the definition thinks that criticism ought to be like, or would be like if only order could be imposed on the concept's confusion. They are more expressive of an unfulfilled wish or hope on the part of the speaker than a description, the irrepressible craving for clarity and conviction in a context whose laws do not seem to allow it. In that they may be the *reverse* of the critical case—anti-definitions.

III

So there is much in the literature of criticism that serves a day-to-day definitional need – to explain, to inspire, to amplify, to justify; nothing, perhaps, in what we have seen that supplies more than three different kinds of pseudo-definition: the functionalist, the typological and the normative. The identification of these inadequate definitions as inadequate is the first step in the direction of making the concept clearer than it would otherwise appear (by removing one element—the *prima facie* element—of the confusion). In consequence we may ask whether 'definitions' attracting the adjectives 'functionalist', 'typological' and 'normative' can really be definitions, since toleration

of other definitional types arguably cancels rather than qualifies the noun 'definition'. But if this is a step in the direction of clarity, the situation we find still seems little different from the one characterized by I. A. Richards over fifty years ago in his chapter on 'The Chaos of Critical Theories':

A few conjectures, a supply of admonitions, many acute isolated observations, some brilliant guesses, much oratory and applied poetry, inexhaustible confusion, a sufficiency of dogma, no small stock of prejudices, whimsies and crotchets, a profusion of mysticism, a little genuine speculation, sundry stray inspirations, pregnant hints and random *aperçus*; of such as these, it may be said without exaggeration, is extant critical theory composed.²⁵

The cases we have considered in this essay fail as definitions, in the one strict sense noted above, but it is *only* in this one strict sense (that of the finalizing definition) that the concept appears impossible to define. We may therefore conclude that failures of these kinds are among the only useful definitional kinds that the concept will bear—the only kinds we might need. The extent to which finalizing definitions of words are necessary to us, has been set forth by Wittgenstein in his *Blue Book*. There is the way that philosophers talk about words and the way that words are actually used:

For remember that in general we don't use language according to strict rules—it hasn't been taught to us by means of strict rules, either. *We*, in our discussions on the other hand, constantly compare language with a calculus proceeding according to exact rules

This is a very one-sided way of looking at language. In practice we very rarely use language as such a calculus. For not only do we not think of the rules of usage—of definitions, etc.—while using language, but when we are asked to give such rules, in most cases we aren't able to do so. We are unable clearly to circumscribe the concepts we use; not because we don't know their real definition, but because there is no real 'definition' to them. To suppose that there *must* be would be like supposing that whenever children play with a ball they play a game according to strict rules.²⁶

We use the word 'criticism' and we know well enough, in Collingwood's terms, what we are 'trying to mean'. We know as well as we can expect to know. In Wittgensteinian terms, we recognize the *useful* imprecision of language. If some words do have precise definition, others do not and 'criticism' is arguably of this kind. Our conception of 'criticism', we could say, while not *in itself* confused, nor non-existent, is only approximately represented in language, and these approximations are helpful. They allow for expansion. The precise meaning such representations have, where a precise meaning is wanted, is the meaning we *choose* to give them on any occasion of use. If we want to use the term in a precise way we can. We can draw the defining line as we speak: 'By this I mean criticism, not mere appreciation'; or 'I am talking to you about criticism, now, not just subjective gush'; or 'What I am saying

applies to criticism, not theory'; or 'When I say criticism I *mean* theory'; Moreover, 'criticism' seems to be one of those terms which perpetually *invite* such redefinition. We like to think of it as something able to be re-shaped by the appearance of new examples of this kind; or as T. S. Eliot put it: '... an important work of literary criticism can alter and expand the content of the term "literary criticism" itself'.²⁷ Granted that we still have to have some antecedent idea of what this 'kind' is if we are to recognize what content is to be expanded (and this we have, in virtue that we do not have to explain the term to have others understand it); yet there is clearly a point when isolating the idea of criticism in verbal form will cease to have use. Our definition will then be too tight. H. A. Mason has noted the sense in which 'The difficulty in defining criticism is on all fours with that felt in trying to define poetry'.²⁸ The concept of criticism is neither non-existent nor confused; but its formulation in language is never uncontested; its useful 'definition' never final. The conflicting testimony is part of the value of the term; and this is why 'criticism' can and does continue in use. Current ideological and dialectical stand-offs concerning the idioms of critical discourse neither negate the concept, nor erase the term from the usable vocabulary of English.

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NOTES

¹ W. W. Robson, *The Definition of Literature and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1982), p. 1.

² John M. Ellis, 'The Logic of the Question: "What is Criticism?"', in Paul Hernadi (ed.), *What is Criticism?* (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1981), p. 23.

³ R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), p. 7.

⁴ I. A. Richards, 'The Definition of a Poem', in *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924; reprinted London: Routledge, 1989), p. 178.

⁵ F. R. Leavis, 'Mutually Necessary', in G. Singh (ed.), *The Critic as Anti-Philosopher: Essays and Papers by F. R. Leavis* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1982), p. 207.

⁶ Matthew Arnold, 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time' (1864), in Miriam Allott and Robert H. Super (eds), *Matthew Arnold* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1986), p. 325.

⁷ Matthew Arnold, *ibid.*, p. 331.

⁸ T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1932), p. 24.

⁹ Ezra Pound, 'Date Line', from *Make It New* (1934), in T. S. Eliot (ed.), *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), p. 75.

¹⁰ *Literary Essays*, *ibid.*, p. 75.

¹¹ F. R. Leavis, 'Criticism and Philosophy', in *The Common Pursuit* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1952), p. 213.

¹² Terry Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism: from The Spectator to Post-Structuralism* (London: Verso, 1984), p. 123.

¹³ *Selected Essays*, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

¹⁴ Or as a function, in the way that attempts have sometimes been made to define literature: e.g. Antony Easthope, *Literary into Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 53: 'Literature exists not as an essence, an entity, a thing, but as a process, a function.'

¹⁵ T. S. Eliot, 'To Criticize the Critic' (1961), *To Criticize the Critic and Other Writings* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), pp. 11-13.

¹⁶ *Literary Essays*, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-5.

- ¹⁷ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton U P., 1957), p. 341.
- ¹⁸ See, for example, Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983); Raman Selden, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1985), Ann Jefferson and David Robey (eds), *Modern Literary Theory A Comparative Introduction* (London: Batsford, 1982, reprinted 1993).
- ¹⁹ T. S. Eliot, 'The Perfect Critic', in *The Sacred Wood. Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1920; reprinted 1967), p. 15.
- ²⁰ See 'Polemical Introduction', in *Anatomy of Criticism*, op cit., pp. 12; 16.
- ²¹ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York, Oxford U P., 1973), p. 96.
- ²² 'These Staggering Questions', in *London Review of Books* (1980), reprinted in *From the Land of Shadows* (London: Pan Books, 1983), p. 205.
- ²³ Edward W. Said, *The World, the Text and the Critic* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), p. 25.
- ²⁴ Ibid., p. 26.
- ²⁵ *Principles of Literary Criticism*, op cit., p. 2.
- ²⁶ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958; reprinted 1993), p. 25.
- ²⁷ T. S. Eliot, 'The Frontiers of Criticism' (1956), in *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), p. 104.
- ²⁸ H. A. Mason, 'An Introduction to Literary Criticism by way of Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie*', *The Cambridge Quarterly*, Vol. 12, Nos 2 and 3, p. 82.

AESTHETIC CONCEPTS AND AESTHETIC EXPERIENCES

Derek Matravers

IN THIS paper I want to return to some well-worn ideas; specifically, the attempt to show that there is a distinctive subject-matter of the aesthetic via consideration of the difference between aesthetic and non-aesthetic concepts. The classic exposition of this distinction is Frank Sibley's 'Aesthetic Concepts'.¹ Sibley claimed that, given a set of relevant terms, there will be widespread non-collusive agreement as to which are aesthetic and which non-aesthetic. Non-aesthetic terms include '*red, noisy, brackish, clammy, square, docile, curved, evanescent, intelligent, faithful, derelict, tardy, freakish*'.² Aesthetic terms include '*unified, lifeless, serene, sombre, dynamic, powerful, vivid, delicate, moving, trite, sentimental, tragic*'.³ Further examples have been given by other philosophers working in the field.⁴ Given the widespread agreement, I shall assume there is a distinction of some sort whose nature is open to be discussed.

Sibley argues that the nature of the aesthetic description of an object depends upon the nature of the non-aesthetic properties of that object.⁵ The nature of this dependence is described in a series of claims he makes which describe our use of aesthetic terms.

(i) No aesthetic description of a work is implied by a purely non-aesthetic description.⁶

(ii) A non-aesthetic description of a work might imply that a particular term could not be correctly applied aesthetically.⁷

(iii) The aesthetic description of a work is bound up with an experience of that work.⁸

(iv) The aesthetic use of terms requires something over and above the use of the senses, namely taste.⁹

(v) A term can have both aesthetic and non-aesthetic uses.¹⁰

The challenge Sibley sets, that of specifying the relation between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic, has generated a wide literature. What is distinctive about Sibley's account is the denial of 'positive condition governing', i.e. (i). By this he means to deny both that there is an analytic connection between non-aesthetic and aesthetic terms and that any set of non-aesthetic properties would be causally sufficient for the correct application of an aesthetic term, if that set is taken as part of a broader set of non-aesthetic properties that

constitute a work of art (or perhaps a work of art in a certain context). These claims sit unhappily with (ii), the affirmation of negative condition governing which suggests that there is a relation of either one of these two sorts.

The other three claims concern the application of aesthetic terms. The final claim has not always received the attention it deserves.¹¹ Consider 'delicate', for example. It might be that, for vase-blowers, this is a technical term defined thus: a vase is delicate if the glass out of which it is made is less than 0.5 mm thick. Uses of the term along these lines, being condition-governed, would not be aesthetic. It is clear, however, that if any term can be used aesthetically, 'delicate' can. I look at a vase, am overwhelmed by its delicacy and exclaim, 'Gosh, that vase is delicate!' Already we can see trouble for someone who says that, in their aesthetic uses, terms refer to aesthetic properties. For if the term used aesthetically refers to an aesthetic property and the term used non-aesthetically refers to a non-aesthetic property, the term would be ambiguous; a *reductio*, for obviously it is not ambiguous.¹²

These two reasons alone—the construal of the relation between the aesthetic and non-aesthetic as negatively but not positively condition-governed and the fact that a single semantic type can be classified under both headings—make it difficult to see how there could be a background theory which explained the distinction and supported all of Sibley's claims. Indeed, when one looks at recent work on the problem one usually finds that one or more of the claims has been abandoned.

Peter Kivy, to take one notable contributor to the debate, rejects (i). He does not so much argue for its falsity as claim that Sibley and others have failed to prove its truth. He proposes instead that there are specifiably sufficient conditions for the application of all aesthetic terms. The example he uses is a Bach *Prelude* which is a 'twenty-four-measure piece in which the main theme (or a variation of it) occurs in every measure'.¹³ This, he claims, entails that the piece is unified. However, Kivy does not consider that he might merely be specifying the conditions for a non-aesthetic use of the term. Furthermore, even if we grant that the use is aesthetic, his single example would not prove the required conclusion: that each aesthetic use of a term can be paraphrased, without remainder, by a purely non-aesthetic description.

Leaving aside Kivy's own motivations, let us examine the kind of position he sketches. On this view, whatever the justification for the aesthetic use of a term, it does not name a property which exists over and above non-aesthetic properties. In that sense, it is a form of reductivism. Kivy—in Jerrold Levinson's words—denies that there are aesthetic properties, 'but only misleading semantic byproducts of certain nonaesthetic judgements which have the form of reference to a realm of distinct attributes'.¹⁴ The first obvious advantage of this is that it contains no hint of anything metaphysically dubious; a term which appears on Sibley's list of examples of those which have a predominantly aesthetic use will be definitionally equivalent to a disjunction of conjunc-

tion of non-aesthetic terms. A second advantage, if indeed it is an advantage, is that it makes clear sense of the practice of giving reasons for aesthetic judgements. On Sibley's view, when presented with a set of non-aesthetic properties, we make a kind of mystical leap to a position where we are entitled to make an aesthetic judgement. On a view such as Kivy's one could reason someone into an aesthetic judgement by arguing first that the term was equivalent to some disjunction of non-aesthetic properties and then that the piece in fact exhibited the properties that went to make up one of the disjuncts. Grasping that a work was unified would be a matter, not of being struck by the work in a particular way, but of understanding it to possess certain properties that, by definition, make it unified.

The view, as I have described it, is deficient in a crucial respect. We are given no reason to believe the aesthetic use of terms (even of 'unified') is always made in virtue of non-aesthetic properties that clearly exemplify a context-independent definition of that term. This amounts to the claim that it is philosophically inadequate simply to affirm positive condition-governing, given that its denial has seemed self-evident to so many for so long. Putting this another way, could we give the non-aesthetic description to which our aesthetic use of a term is supposed to reduce? If *nothing* non-aesthetic can be said about the 'shape' of our aesthetic use of a term, this suggests that our use is not grounded in definitions in non-aesthetic terms.

Another popular view, which may even be that of Sibley, is to hold that aesthetic terms refer to aesthetic properties.¹⁵ Such properties are caused by groups of non-aesthetic properties and are detected in perception. Because it is held that the relationship between non-aesthetic and aesthetic properties is causal, it follows that no set of non-aesthetic properties logically entails that an aesthetic property applies. It is less clear to see why there should not be positive condition-governing grounded in causation. There are a number of accounts of why this is not the case, all pointing up the variety of factors that need to be in place for the causation to occur and stressing the sensitivity of such factors to context. Hence, a change in context makes it doubtful that the causation which happened last time will recur.

This view is also deficient in several respects. First, the proposals as to what aesthetic properties actually are seldom perspicuous. Some hold that they are emergent properties while others hold that they are akin to aspects.¹⁶ Without further explication (which it seldom gets) the first proposal is open to the charge of quietism. The account of how the aesthetic property emerged would need to be in terms of those properties on which it depends: the non-aesthetic properties. It is this account which is not forthcoming. The second account—that an aesthetic property is akin to an aspect—is altogether different; seeing the delicacy in the vase is analogous to seeing the duck in the duck/rabbit figure. The perceived advantage of this is that, on the assumption that understanding aspect perception requires a notion of interpretation, understanding

the perception of aesthetic properties would require a notion of interpretation as well. I cannot find even a glimmer of an account here; there simply is no informative analogy.¹⁷ The second problem with the view that aesthetic terms refer to aesthetic properties is the flat denial of negative condition-governing; a claim which, unless one has an axe to grind, one must find independently plausible. The third, as I have said before, is the unacceptable consequence of rendering many of our terms ambiguous between their aesthetic and non-aesthetic employment.

A general claim compatible with this view is that the relation between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic is one of *supervenience*. In clarifying this, Jerrold Levinson divides non-aesthetic properties into three sorts: the structural, the sub-structural and the contextual. Structural properties are (roughly) non-aesthetic properties which would be given in perception to a (qualified) observer. Sub-structural properties are those not perceivable as such, that is, those which are not discriminable in perception from similar properties of similar magnitude. Levinson's example is of a line 'exactly 3.3333 centimetres long in the upper left-hand corner'. A contextual property is an 'appreciatively important relation of the object to the artistic context in which it occurs (e.g. being painted by Mondrian, being in a certain genre, being influenced by the *Mona Lisa*)'.¹⁸ Aesthetic properties, he claims, supervene on structural properties. The supervenience claim is supposed to hold within, rather than across, worlds: that is, in any world, any two objects that differ aesthetically, but neither contextually nor (purely) substructurally, differ structurally.

It is as true, however, that in any world, any two objects that differ aesthetically, but neither structurally nor (purely) substructurally, differ contextually.¹⁹ The difficulty is in specifying the supervenience base. Part of the problem is with Levinson's term 'contextual'; interpreted broadly enough it could just mean anything that needs to be held constant for the supervenience claim to be credible. However, if one believes, as perhaps one should, that the truth of the belief that a ballet is graceful may depend on it being culturally accepted that it is graceful ('this is the way grace is going'), the supervenience base is going to look decidedly big and unwieldy and the supervenience claim decidedly thin.

What, then, should we say about the relation between the non-aesthetic and the aesthetic? Part of the problem is that our concept of the aesthetic is a mess. I quote from the definition in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*: 'Things perceivable by the senses as opposed to things thinkable or immaterial. Misapplied in German by Baumgarten to 'criticism of taste' and so used in England since 1830'.²⁰ Common usage of the term, as it has these two different strands, is a confusing guide. Sibley and others are closer to the original use: pertaining to those things 'perceivable by the senses as opposed to things thinkable or immaterial'; or, as we might say now, to those things necessarily linked to experience.

My contention in this paper is that, even in this narrower sense, the term is doing double duty. The difficulty with Sibley's claims is that some of them are about beliefs about objects, and others about the way in which those beliefs are acquired. Consider attempts to define a class of aesthetic beliefs in terms of the link those beliefs have to an aesthetic experience.²¹ The belief that the music is sad is aesthetic because it can only be acquired by hearing the music as sad. This is plainly false; an aesthetic clod could acquire such a belief by reading a programme note. So long as 'aesthetic' qualifies the belief, the necessary link to experience is severed and Sibley's claims about experience, (iii) and (iv), are falsified.

The term does a double duty because it is sometimes reserved for beliefs of the above sort *directly acquired in the paradigm way*; that is, those beliefs directly caused by an aesthetic experience. Confusion surrounding the double duty of the term 'aesthetic' goes back at least to Kant. The judgement of taste was necessarily bound to experience, yet the judgement 'x is beautiful' is, as we have seen, logically distinct from the experience; for instance, it persists once the experience has ceased. The double duty springs from the fact that the subject matter of aesthetics is to do with the having of the experience, so the term needs to mark this out. However, how the experience is reported, by the resultant belief, is also important; so the term applies to this as well. The problems arise from the failure to take proper account of the fact that the experience and the belief are logically distinct. For the rest of the paper, when I use the term in its narrowest sense, to qualify a belief directly caused by an aesthetic experience, I shall write 'aesthetic*'. There are, therefore, aesthetic beliefs which are not aesthetic* beliefs but not vice versa. The aesthetic clod who believes the music is sad does not know what the aesthete experiences that he does not. That is, although he has the belief, he does not know the experience which would enable him to have an aesthetic* belief with the same content.

Consider the parallel with colour. Someone blind from birth can have the belief that cricket balls are red; they have been told as much by a reliable source. Such a person lacks the capacity to have 'colour*' beliefs; he can never have a belief that is directly caused by the experience of a cricket ball as red. Similarly, a sighted person's belief that cricket balls are red is, unless directly caused by a red cricket ball, not a colour* belief.

Putting aside for a moment the essential detail, that is, an account of aesthetic experience, we can see that Sibley's claims (iii) and (iv) are about aesthetic* utterances. First, (iii) the aesthetic* description of a work is bound up with an experience of that work. Obviously so, if the description only qualifies an aesthetic* if it is directly caused by that experience. Second, (iv) the aesthetic* use of terms requires something over and above the use of the senses, namely taste. One will certainly require some distinctive capacities to experience an object aesthetically and one may as well follow tradition and refer to

these as 'taste'. To deny this would be to hold—absurdly—that one set of capacities (our 'normal' capacities for, say, colour and shape detection) will enable us to have any kind of experience whatsoever.

Let us look now at claims (i) and (ii). The first claim denies that one can move from a description in terms of non-aesthetic properties to a correct aesthetic judgement. Waters have been muddled somewhat, because Sibley and I disagree on the sort of thing non-aesthetic properties are: those things on which aesthetic beliefs directly depend are not properties of objects, but states of mind of observers.²² However, the substantial point Sibley wishes to make, that an aesthetic judgement stems from an experience of a work rather than a description of it, is an analytic truth for aesthetic* beliefs. And, to fish out another red herring, this is not to say that we cannot experience a work as a result of a description of it. Having a work present is only one way, the best way, of experiencing it.

But can an experience ever be necessary for a judgement? On the assumption that the content of an experience can be given by a description, how can a mental representation, even in the central case, be necessarily tied to an experience? For surely, someone given the description will be in the same position as someone who has the experience. The obvious answer is that there are aspects of the experiences, which are part of the content of the aesthetic belief, which are only available in experiences.²³ One venerable suggestion for such an aspect is the feeling of pleasure. An aesthetic* utterance is one in which one expresses one's pleasure in one's experience of the object. One person looks at the vase and, on the basis of what he sees, judges that it is delicate. The second person looks at the vase and, on the basis of what he sees and the pleasure it gives him, judges that it is delicate. The second utterance is aesthetic (and in this case aesthetic*), the first non-aesthetic. When he considered this, Kivy argued that the feeling of pleasure may change the term the person uses; so the first person could have judged the vase insipid and the second delicate.²⁴ On the assumption that the objects that are disposed to give one pleasure are not determinable in advance, this view entails the denial of positive condition-governing. It also, obviously, makes the requisite necessary connection between aesthetic judgements and experience. It fails, however, in delivering a serious account of the aesthetic. Aesthetic* judgements are not just ordinary descriptive judgements delivered with a squeal of pleasure.

If not pleasure, what? We need to take seriously the variety of terms that are used aesthetically and the thought that an aesthetic utterance communicates something more distinctive about our experience than simply that it has a certain content and is had with pleasure. The mental state caused by an object which results in an aesthetic utterance consists, in part, in some other aspect of the experience which is only available in experience the nature of which partly determines the identity of the term used aesthetically. (Pleasure is also

part of this experience, but as it is not crucial to the account I will not mention it further.) Let me first clarify what I mean by 'an aspect of the experience which is only available in experience'. An experience usually represents the world as being some way or other; that is, the person having the experience comes to have beliefs about the world around him. There are some aspects of experience which, although they might lead to beliefs about the way the world is around us, are also essentially tied to experience: paradigmatically colours. To reiterate: looking at a cricket ball might give me the belief that it is red (a belief I could communicate to someone who cannot see the cricket ball) but it does so because I experience the ball as red. The important matter, that which aesthetics is all about, is that having an experience described is not the same as having an experience; if one wants to see a red cricket ball one should not go in search of a description.

This is a return to the ancient and appealing idea that aesthetic perception parallels colour perception.²⁵ I will sum up the story so far and then deal with some objections. Experiencing a certain object causes an observer to believe it is fluted, blue, made of very thin glass, about six inches tall, and so on. There are other aspects of the observer's experience whose importance for us stems from their phenomenological character. Despite this character, which connects it necessarily to experience, these also represent the world as being a certain way. This is a further aspect of the aesthetic utterance's claim about the world: the claim that the object appears one way rather than another. One way in which the aesthetic claim differs from the colour claim is that this information is not always (or even usually) communicated by the use of a *sui generis* term. It is not usually the words in an utterance by which we pick up that it is aesthetic*, but the way it is said.²⁶ The difference is that between 'the vase is delicate' uttered by the person who sees it as delicate and 'the vase is delicate' uttered by the person who sees it and merely believes it is delicate (because it says so in the exhibition guide).

Now to deal with some objections. Earlier, I defined beliefs attributing colour caused as a direct result of an aspect of the experience which is only available in experience (that is, of the object as coloured) as 'colour*' beliefs. What distinguishes colour* beliefs from aesthetic* beliefs? The point can be put another way: we have defined aesthetic* beliefs as those which are necessarily tied to experience. The central cases of colour beliefs (those acquired through an experience) meet this definition. What differentiates the two kinds of belief? The answer is that aesthetic* beliefs are not defined in terms of a necessary link to any old experience, but to an aesthetic experience. In making an aesthetic judgement, we are also aware of being in some kind of aesthetic attitude which could be defined independently of the judgement we were making.²⁷ Furthermore, the character of the experience associated with aesthetics differs from that associated with colour (or judgements of other kinds—gustatory pleasure, for example).

The next objection is a perennial problem for such accounts as these. I have talked of the aesthetic* judgement as being caused by some kind of sensation aroused by the object. However, sensations (or feelings) do not represent their causes as being any particular way. How can I claim, as I do claim, that an aesthetic utterance communicates something about the appearance of the object? Put another way, what entitles me to claim that the object can be described in a term which has an appropriate relation to the feeling? The alcohol which makes me depressed is not thereby depressing. Certainly, we will have to distinguish, within the states of mind caused by the world, between those which represent the world as being a certain way and those which do not. The danger for my view would be if objects which cause feelings are never represented as having a certain relevant appearance: and certain, the alcohol which causes my depression is not represented as depressing. This question cannot be ducked, but it is too complex to be answered in full. I shall give an inadequate compromise by mentioning three points.

First, the analogous colour case goes through without a problem. An explanation of the judgement that an object is red requires reference to visual sensations of red which are caused in an observer. The mental state of which these sensations are part does represent the object as red. (This might be thought a good reason to deny the analogy of course; but more discussion would be needed.)

Second, the reason the alcohol is not represented as having a depressing appearance is because it is not represented at all. Only objects which are represented in consciousness can be represented as having a certain appearance and works of art *do* fall in this category. Furthermore, and crucially, those aspects of our experience of the work of art which are not necessarily tied to experience (that is, Levinson's structural and substructural properties) are an important determinant of the aesthetic appearance of the work. We will be aware of how the feeling (which is necessarily part of the cause of the aesthetic utterance) can change as we concentrate on different features of these structural properties. In other words, changes in the feeling track changes in our attention to the structural properties, in the way that changes in our mood does not track changes in our *attention* to alcohol. Although I cannot make out the full case here, I believe these are the considerations which separate expression from mere arousal.

Third, the problem is widespread. Projectivist accounts of ethics, for example, claim that to pass an ethical judgement on a situation is a matter of 'projecting' our aroused attitudes onto that situation. This needs to accommodate the fact that the phenomenology of the ethical is (it is claimed) more naturally described as perceptual. A more dramatic example are those metaphysical views which hold that facts supervene on representations.²⁸ As this

view starts with representations caused by the way the world is and works towards a list of what facts there are, some account will need to be given as to what counts as a representation, and what counts merely as an effect, of the way the world is.

Apart from that mentioned above, there is another cause of suspicion of the analogy with colour. I have claimed that experiencing an object aesthetically reveals that it has a certain dispositional property. Why, then, do we have a range of colour terms but (according to me) no (or few) purely aesthetic terms? Far from being a problem, this is a further explanatory strength of the account. One of the mysteries in the field of work on aesthetic concepts is why the two classic papers in the field, Sibley's 'Aesthetic Concepts' and Isenberg's 'Critical Communication', should, despite a similarity of approach, differ in one prominent and peculiar respect. Sibley and Isenberg agree that there are aesthetic properties that are detectable in perception, but whilst Sibley seems happy to give them names Isenberg claims they are unnameable.²⁹ Actually, some of these dispositional properties have their own names and others do not.

Recall the claim that the truth of aesthetic utterances supervene on the states of mind of observers; any part of that state of mind might be a part of the cause of the belief that an aesthetic predicate applies, including those parts which represent the object as being a certain way which are not necessarily tied to experience. Consider the vase again; experiencing it causes an observer to believe it is fluted, blue, made of very thin glass, about six inches tall, and so on. By itself this may be enough to ground the non-aesthetic judgement that it is delicate. If, in addition, the observer gets a feeling (perhaps akin to loss, or anxiety about the object's fragility) this may prompt an aesthetic (or in this case aesthetic*) judgement. It would be senseless to use a different term; what needs to be communicated is the response to just those properties of the vase that are to do with it being (non-aesthetically) delicate.

Contrast a case in which an observer is experiencing a simple pencil sketch. It may be, as has been repeatedly claimed by Sibley and others, that there is nothing one could say about this object, that did not have a necessary connection to experience, which would determine whether it was delicate or insipid. The term which is appropriate in the aesthetic judgement will be that which is caused by the feeling the picture causes in the observer. There may even be terms ('pretty' perhaps the most likely candidate) which are akin to 'thin' concepts in ethics. Their use carries a minimum of descriptive content; they are made solely on the basis of the feeling aroused. What we have here are really two different questions. First, why is there not a vocabulary exclusive to aesthetics as there is a vocabulary exclusive to colour? Second, what makes the use of a term more or less aesthetic? The first is answered by pointing out that the observer usually wants to direct attention towards the non-aesthetic

properties rather than away from them. As for the second, the more prominent the aesthetic feelings are in the cause of the utterance, the more aesthetic it is.

Negative condition-governing of some aesthetic terms is a simple consequence of this. Sibley had claimed that from the non-aesthetic description of a work as being solely comprised of pastel shades it followed (as a matter of meaning) that the term 'garish' could not be used correctly. Some have claimed that this is not a matter of meaning, merely of empirical improbability. Setting aside Quinean scruples for a moment, it just seems wrong to deny that there could be meaning connection here. This is not a problem; it is perfectly in order to hold that amongst the complex mental state which causes the utterance that a work is garish must be (as a matter of the meaning of the term) the perception of bright colours.

This brings us nicely onto ambiguity. Does my account make terms ambiguous between their aesthetic and non-aesthetic uses? It is difficult to show not because of the variety of terms that can be used aesthetically. Usually, the aesthetic use of a term claims that the properties of the object described by the term non-aesthetically have much to do with the disposition to cause certain experiences. True, the aesthetic and non-aesthetic use of the same utterance do not amount to exactly the same thing. Standing in Durham Cathedral I say 'It's vast.' 'Yes,' says my interlocutor, 'the nave is over 200 feet long.' Something here is not being communicated; I did not mean just to say that the thing was big, but to draw my colleague's attention to the dispositional property of the size to cause a feeling of insignificance, or of being overwhelmed. Does this mean 'vast' is ambiguous? No; just that, on this occasion, my colleague is not grasping everything that I mean.

What about the aesthetic use of terms such as 'sad'? If I make the aesthetic judgement that a piece of music is sad, I am claiming that it has a certain appearance when heard aesthetically. Am I also directing attention to properties of it that could be judged non-aesthetically to be sad? Perhaps: I could be directing attention to properties of music which resemble the appearance and behaviour of a sad person. Again there is no ambiguity. The various uses are unified by linking them to the appearance and behaviour of a sad person. I myself am unhappy with this and will return to the point below.

This brings us onto another worry we might have about the overall account. I have postulated feelings caused by objects which, with a bit of pushing and shoving, deliver an account of aesthetic utterances which squares all of Sibley's various claims. What more can be said about them? More specifically, if I saw that what makes the judgement 'the vase is delicate' aesthetic is that it is caused by an aesthetic feeling, and define aesthetic feeling as that caused by the vase which causes us to make the aesthetic judgement, I seem to have rather a tight circle. Here I am inclined not to be bullied. My account, in terms of representations that have a necessary tie to experience, falls squarely in the

domain of aesthetics as discussed by philosophers from Aristotle to Sibley, but in particular by Kant. Experience is necessary because the point of aesthetics is in having the experience, not in having it described. It is these aspects of the experience I want to capture by the term 'feelings'. I doubt whether there is anything general one can say about the nature of these feelings. I have argued elsewhere that when the aesthetic judgement employs an emotion term, it is partially caused by a feeling, which bears some appropriate relation to the feelings appropriate to the use of that emotion term in the central cases. (It is this which blocks the ambiguity, not similarity, between sad music and sad people as suggested above.) Other aesthetic judgements may be caused by feelings which are particular to aesthetics; I do not see that this makes aesthetic judgements any more dubious than colour judgements. The argument for the postulation of aesthetic feelings, like the postulation of visual sensation of colour is two-fold. We know we have them and it is impossible to deliver an account of the relevant judgements without them.

What are the implications of the account I propose for realism or, a slightly different question, the use of reasoning in aesthetics? One way of putting the first question is to ask whether all the objects to which the aesthetic term *p* can properly be applied can be specified independently of our reaction to it. In other words, granted that the aesthetic use of *p* supervenes on the state of mind of an observer, does the state of mind of the observer supervene on facts describable independently of *p*? No, because, as I have pointed out before, there is no way of determining the limit on what needs to be put in the supervenience base. Secondly, the more metaphysical issue, there is no reason to believe such a base could be specified non-dispositionally; the disposition to cause aesthetic feelings of a particular sort may not have a specifiable categorical base even in principle. Of course, this will vary between aesthetic terms. The kinds of things to which the term 'garish' could be correctly applied probably forms a tightly knit group; 'graceful' a lot less so.

This makes the final objection so much more acute. If the vase causes a certain feeling in me, I judge that it is delicate. How could I, then, ever be mistaken? Does this mean that it is always inappropriate to reason about aesthetic judgements (as it would, for example, be inappropriate to reason someone into seeing something as red)? What about the objectivity of aesthetic judgements? What is it to appreciate a work; surely that is more than simply to receive (the aesthetic equivalent of) a poke in the eye?

Part of the problem is in the term 'subjectivity' which, amongst other things, can mean 'mind dependent' and 'idiosyncratic'. The fallacious thought is that because the truth of a judgement is in terms of the effect something has on individual minds, there cannot be interpersonal standards of correctness. Fortunately, as it would entail that we never made true colour judgements, this is simply an equivocation. The normative element of colour judgements is given by specifying a standard observer in standard perceptual conditions.

However, as Kant stressed, if my colour vision is wonky, I am not wrong so much as unusual. Surely aesthetics is not like this; reason-giving, and maybe even attitudes such as praise and blame, are appropriate.

I agree that on the view I am putting forward it will be impossible to reason an aesthetic clod into making an aesthetic judgement. As the truth of this consequence has been considered self-evident by many, including Sibley, and its analogue in ethics is widely accepted I take this as a strength rather than a weakness of the account. There are, however, two respects in which reason-giving and notions such as appreciation are appropriate. First, an analogue of the normal observer, we can set standards on the capacities of observers to have appropriate aesthetic experiences. Some sensibilities will be defective; for example, in being immature or marred by twisted education. Second, an analogue of normal perceptual circumstances, we can set standards on what it is appropriate to take into account in the aesthetic experience of an object. That is, are the appropriate structural and contextual properties being considered? Both of these respects support reason-giving and argument.

There is still the question of the grounds for these notions of appropriateness. What is a defective sensibility? What determines the contextual properties which need to be taken into account? These are very interesting questions; it is here, I think, that there are significant differences between ethics and aesthetics. It is natural, in ethics, to block the danger of our ethical standards being arbitrary by attempting to ground them in reason.³⁰ My intuition is that such arbitrariness is not a danger in aesthetics; I do not care much if the thinner aesthetic terms have different extensions in different possible worlds. This suggests that the standards may very well be internal to the subject. That is, aesthetic experiences may come to be seen to be defective in terms of satisfactions afforded by later experiences. This, of course, is not a full account but rather a suggestion that the problem of standards in aesthetics may be less difficult, and more interesting, than it appears.³¹

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NOTES

¹ Frank Sibley, 'Aesthetic Concepts' (1959), in ed. G. Dickie and R. Sclafani (eds), *Aesthetics* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1977), pp. 815-37.

² *Ibid.*, p. 816.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 817.

⁴ For example, Isabel Creed Hungerland, 'Once Again, Aesthetic and Non-Aesthetic', *Journal of Aesthetic and Art Criticism*, Vol. 26 (1968), p. 285.

⁵ Frank Sibley, 'Aesthetic and Non-aesthetic', *Philosophical Review*, Vol. 74 (1965), pp. 137-93.

⁶ Sibley, *op. cit.*, 1959, and *op. cit.*, 1965, p. 152.

⁷ Sibley, *op. cit.*, 1959, p. 820, and *op. cit.*, 1965, p. 153 (i) and (ii) taken together may be inconsistent. Let us call a particular aesthetic term A. By (ii) a set of non-aesthetic properties might entail -A. However, it is

possible that there is another aesthetic term B which simply means -A. (If not, we can invent one.) Hence, the set of non-aesthetic properties entails B which contradicts (i). It may be that (in) blocks the move from A not applying to there being another word, B, which does apply as it is not clear that we can experience an absence. None of this matters for the purposes of my paper, so I am not going to explore it further.

- ⁸ Sibley, op. cit., 1965, p. 137
- ⁹ Sibley, op. cit., 1959, p. 818, and op. cit., 1965, p. 135.
- ¹⁰ Sibley, op. cit., 1959, p. 815.
- ¹¹ A notable exception is Ruby Meager's excellent paper, 'Aesthetic Concepts', *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 10 (1970), pp. 303-22.
- ¹² cf. Roger Scruton, *Art and the Imagination* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 39.
- ¹³ Peter Kivy, 'What makes "aesthetic" terms aesthetic?', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 36 (1975), p. 205.
- ¹⁴ Jerrold Levinson, 'Aesthetic Supervenience' (1983), in *Music, Art and Metaphysics* (Ithaca, Cornell U.P., 1990), p. 139
- ¹⁵ Another notable example is Monroe C. Beardsley, 'The Descriptivist Account of Aesthetic Attributions', *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, Vol. 109 (1974), pp. 336-52
- ¹⁶ For the first see Beardsley, op. cit., 1974, and Levinson, op. cit., 1990, for the second see Scruton, op. cit., 1974.
- ¹⁷ For a more detailed criticism of Scruton, see Malcolm Budd, *Music and the Emotions* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), pp. 144-8.
- ¹⁸ Levinson, op. cit., 1990, p. 135.
- ¹⁹ cf. Marcia Muelder Eaton, 'The intrinsic, non-supervenient nature of aesthetic properties', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 52 (1994), pp. 383-97.
- ²⁰ *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1980), p. 32
- ²¹ Accounts which incorporate this requirement include Meager, op. cit., 1970, Scruton, op. cit., 1974, and, more recently, Muelder Eaton, op. cit., 1994.
- ²² This is suggested in Gregory Currie, 'Supervenience, essentialism and aesthetic properties', *Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 58, (1990), pp. 243-57.
- ²³ cf. Scruton, op. cit., 1974, p. 54.
- ²⁴ Kivy, op. cit., 1974, pp. 209-10.
- ²⁵ cf. Frank Sibley, 'Objectivity and Aesthetics', *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume*, Vol. 42 (1978), pp. 32-3.
- ²⁶ cf. Meager, op. cit., 1970, p. 304.
- ²⁷ cf. Eva Schaper, 'The Pleasures of Taste', in E. Schaper (ed), *Pleasure, Preference and Value* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1983), p. 54.
- ²⁸ See for example Hugh Mellor, 'Properties and Predicates', in his *Matters of Metaphysics* (Cambridge U.P., 1991), and the essays by Tom Baldwin and E. J. Lowe in T. Crane (ed.), *The Contents of Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1992)
- ²⁹ Arnold Isenberg, 'Critical Communication', in his *Aesthetics and the Theory of Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), pp. 156-71.
- ³⁰ cf. Michael Smith, 'Dispositional Theories of Value', in *Supplementary Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Vol. LXIII (1989), pp. 89-111.
- ³¹ I am grateful for conversations with Hugh Mellor and colleagues at the Open University on points relevant to this paper

ARTISTIC EXPRESSION AND THE CLAIMS OF AROUSAL THEORY

John E. MacKinnon

EXPRESSIVE PREDICATES and the qualities they presume to identify pose particular difficulties for aesthetic enquiry. For, notwithstanding the naturalness with which we use such terms, it remains to be asked how it is that qualities that in their primary use are ascribed to human beings can legitimately be ascribed to inanimate objects like works of art. Among the several attempts to account for artistic expression is the arousal theory. On this view, our ascription of qualities to a given work is determined by the emotions that work causes or arouses in us.

Although the theory has an obvious and immediate appeal, it has not always been charitably received. Wittgenstein disparages it as 'stupid' and 'ridiculous', Nelson Goodman as 'preposterous' and 'crude' and Peter Kivy as 'profoundly wrong', an 'utterly hopeless view'.¹ Conflict over the issue may well constitute aesthetics' own 'ancient quarrel', but Kivy insists that in criticizing the arousal theory he is not simply beating a dead horse, but rather, 'one that is alive and kicking'.² A recent and particularly spirited proponent of the view is Derek Matravers, and it is to a critique of his arguments that I now propose to turn.

I. CENTRAL USE OR CAUSAL RULE?

Let us call the view that a feature, object or situation is sad to the extent that it causes sadness in me the *brute* version of arousal theory. In an article, entitled, 'Art and the Feelings and Emotions', Matravers purports to defend the arousal theory while avoiding its brute implications.³ The question is, does he succeed?

According to Matravers, our ascription of emotion terms to insensate objects is generally accounted for in terms of transference, specifically from the emotion itself to its characteristic causes and effects. Thus, we speak of sad situations, sad faces and sad attempts at making an omelette because all are characteristic causes of sadness.

Matravers sums up this position by claiming that the extended uses of terms are explained by their 'clear causal links with their central use' (p. 322). This, however, is a decidedly infelicitous turn of phrase, since the most that he can claim is that extended uses of terms are dependent upon causal relations

between emotions, on the one hand, and features, objects or situations, on the other. The transfer, or extension of use, is not caused. Rather, it is warranted in light of an alleged causal connection. For Matravers, then, we can at least conclude that extended uses are dependent in a way that central uses are not.

Now, it is uncontroversial that the central use of emotion terms involves identifying the emotional states of human beings. But, for consistency's sake, this otherwise privileged status cannot, on the arousal view, entail the *givenness* of that use. In other words, there would have to be an account given of the central, no less than the extended, uses. Indeed, if by claiming that extended uses are dependent upon some central use we mean that they are dependent upon, if only at one remove from, causal relations between emotions and features, objects or situations, then the central use itself must be *directly* dependent upon that same causal relation.

As Matravers says, the central use for emotion terms is 'in ascribing feelings or emotions to people' (p. 322). This could be interpreted as limiting central usage to third-person ascriptions, although, on a more liberal reading, it could be regarded as applying to both third and first-person ascriptions. In either case, the use has causal roots in first-hand experience, that is, in how something strikes *me*. This causal rule, rather than any notion of a central use, must be the true given for Matravers. Once we acknowledge it as such, though, we are compelled to concede that the central use of emotion terms in third-person ascriptions must itself involve transference, namely, from the emotional effect caused in me to the person who caused it. Of course, once this incongruity is admitted, we can no longer reasonably regard third-person ascriptions of emotions as central. Genuine central use applies to directly caused personal reactions. All other uses, including third-person ascriptions of emotions to others, are, whether directly or at one remove, dependent, and therefore involve transference from that lone central use.

Take the case of the sad omelette, or more, the sad situation of my having made a mess of an omelette. If the use of the term 'sad' in this case is grounded in and transferred on the basis of a first-person ascription ('I feel sad'), then the sadness of the omelette is a matter of how it affects me. I extend the use of the term because the state of the omelette causes sadness in me. On the other hand, if the use of 'sad' to describe the omelette is grounded in and transferred on the basis of a third-person ascription ('She is sad'), then the sadness of the state of the omelette still depends, albeit at one remove, on its effect on me. After all, if the omelette is sad only insofar as it causes sadness in Kate and if, in turn, Kate is sad only insofar as she causes sadness in me, then the sadness of the omelette ultimately depends upon my reaction from a third-person perspective to the person who is reacting to the omelette.

Now, if this interpretation is correct, it saddles Matravers with a brute version of arousal theory, at least concerning the ascription of emotion terms

generally. After all, the most central feature of the interpretation is its portrayal of my identification of the emotion of another as a matter of that emotion's being caused in me and my transferring it to its cause, namely, the person to whom I am reacting. But is this fair? Matravers would argue that it is not, that he has expressly ensured that this consequence be avoided by emphasizing that the features, objects and situations to which emotions are ascribed are characteristic causes or effects of those emotions. This important qualification permits him to argue that sadness does not have to be caused within one in order for one to describe another person as sad. Instead, one simply recognizes in that person's bearing or expression certain effects of sadness.

However, consider a case where someone's sadness manifests itself not simply in expressions, postures and sounds, but in their penchant for gorging themselves on pickles while watching soap operas, or going for long walks, or even laughing exaggeratedly and inappropriately. Even if the aspects of one's response are anything but eccentric, indeed perfectly ordinary, the fact remains that there is a vast array of behavioural features that are coincident with or subsequent to the onset of sadness. But which of these are indicative of and which merely incidental to sadness? In other words, to identify some features, and not others, as effects is to beg the very important question of whether the relation between the sadness and the behavioural features is a matter of causal connection or mere temporal succession. Only if it is the former can a given feature count as an effect. Here, obviously, the notion of an effect, which is the very thing that needs to be determined, can do no work for us. Accordingly, the causal theorist must be committed to the view that of those behavioural features that are coincident with or subsequent to the onset of sadness, only those which cause sadness in me upon considering them can count as sad features. The remainder are merely incidental. At best, this returns Matravers to a model of emotional ascription that rests ultimately on personal response. At worse, it confronts him squarely with the threat of an infinite regress.

Matravers suggests that the aesthetic use of emotion terms is 'parasitic' upon the central application of those terms to human beings, that in order to master the aesthetic use of a term like 'sad' we would have to understand how it is used to describe people (p. 323). However, since works of art usually are not, he adds, characteristic causes or effects of the emotions that are ascribed to them, the transference in question is not subject to the criticisms we have just finished reviewing. And yet, as we will see below, Matravers is anything but resolute in his commitment to separate questions of aesthetic response from those of characteristic causes and effects.

II. THE ARTISTICALLY EXPRESSIBLE AND THE ARTISTICALLY INEXPRESSIBLE

In spite of his apparent, if reluctant, reliance on the brute version of arousal theory, Matravers proceeds to claim that we tend to respond to other people's

emotions only 'with a *related* feeling or emotion' (p. 324; my emphasis). Similarly, when he asks what sort of reaction we normally have to the sadness of others, he answers that it '[p]artly ... makes us sad too' (p. 324; my emphasis). Ultimately, he concludes that 'we do not usually respond to the expression of an emotion with the same emotion—whether to a person or to a work of art' (p. 325). In other words, we do not after all tend to ascribe sadness to something on the basis of its making me sad. That Matravers is making this claim may seem a surprise, but the claim itself ought not to. Indeed, the claim as it stands is far too temperate. We are given occasion to develop this point when he turns his attention to the issue of what he calls 'the limited scope of the feelings and emotions' which we attribute to works of art (p. 328).

According to Matravers, emotions such as shame, embarrassment and respect can well be depicted in art, but it is 'unusual ... to encounter works which express these emotions' (p. 329). His explanation of this limitation, however, is hardly convincing. Emotions that are artistically expressible, he says, are those which prompt characteristic responses. 'There is no one such response', however, to emotions such as shame, embarrassment and respect (p. 329). After all, writes Matravers, '[s]hame may prompt sympathy ..., but equally it may prompt irritation if we think the person is being over-sensitive' (p. 329).⁴ In other words, our reaction to emotions like shame, embarrassment or respect 'depends, in general, on our own attitudes to what the person is ashamed of, embarrassed about or respectful towards' (p. 329). However, this attempt by Matravers to distinguish between artistically expressible and artistically inexpressible emotions is quite without foundation. Indeed, his argument merely confirms a similarity, rather than establishes a difference, between what he wants to regard as two sorts of emotion. Not only does a paradigmatically expressible emotion like sadness not command any more characteristic a response than does shame, but all variations in response are similarly accounted for, namely, in terms of *whose* emotion it is to which we are responding and *what* the object of their own emotion is. Just as I might respond to shame with sympathy or irritation, so might I respond to sadness with irritation or glee. If a young boy cries mightily upon his favourite team's having suffered a heartbreaking defeat, I may well find his reaction sad. Indeed, it may, in Matravers' terms, *make* me sad (although, of course, it need not). But I am sure to find it exasperating, not sad, if the boy's father responds in the same way.

Thus, what Matravers ought to have concluded is not just that we do not usually respond to the expression of an emotion with the same emotion, but that we can indeed respond in a great variety of ways, depending on a wealth of potential considerations. Still, we can at least be assured that Matravers is aware of the disparity between the emotion with which we respond to a work and that which the work expresses. But whereas this point would seem to

count *against* the arousal theory, Matravers is convinced he can reconcile the two. How is this possible?

III. EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS

An emotion, says Matravers, has three components: the cognitive, the phenomenological and the psychological. Thus, if I am afraid of something, I recognize some object or situation as threatening, I feel discomfort and a desire to flee and, finally, my palms sweat, heartbeat quickens and flow of adrenalin increases.

At one point, Matravers equates the phenomenological and physiological components of an emotion with that emotion's feeling component (p. 328). Elsewhere, however, he refers to 'the feelings *and* physiology of an emotion', indicating that the feeling component of an emotion is in fact the phenomenological component alone (p. 324). Either way, the strategy behind his account of the tripartite structure of emotions is clear. It allows him to distinguish between emotions and feelings. An emotion is a feeling that is conjoined with a cognitive component, while a feeling amounts to the phenomenological (or phenomenological *and* physiological) features of an emotion, but in the absence of any cognitive component. Just as it is possible, according to Matravers, for one to have the cognitive component of an emotion without having the other two, so it is possible for one to experience the phenomenological and physiological components of an emotion while lacking its cognitive component. Even in the absence of the cognitive component, however, the residual feeling can still be identified in terms of the full fledged emotion. 'In other words,' writes Matravers, 'one can be sad or afraid, without being sad *about*, or afraid *of*, anything in particular. Then one is just feeling frightened or sad. Sadness, in short, like fear, can be either a feeling or an emotion' (p. 324).

We have seen how Matravers claims that we tend to respond to objects, situations and the emotions of others only with a *related* feeling or emotion. When he insists that the sadness of others *partly* makes us sad, the part he has in mind is our feelings. He suggests that our imaginative identification with a sad person 'will result in a sympathetic feeling of sadness in us ...' (p. 325). Hence, insofar as sadness in such an instance can be counted as having caused sadness, even if only in the form of a feeling. Matravers can portray himself as a resolute arousal theorist. But the feeling that is produced in such a case constitutes the phenomenological component of a new, different and fully-fledged emotion, such as pity. This ensures that the new emotion, though different, remains *related* to the original emotion. At the same time, however, the fact that the resulting emotion is different allows Matravers openly to grant that there is frequently a disparity between the emotion that is expressed (sadness, for example) and that which is caused (say, pity).

Not only does the distinction between emotions and feelings enable Matravers to defend the arousal theory while admitting that emotions expressed and

emotions caused are often different, it also furnishes him with a response to another common objection to the arousal theory, namely, that which concerns the absence in non-representational art of a content about which we can have beliefs, the failure of non-representational art, in other words, to provide a cognitive component for our emotional response. Equipped with his distinction, Matravers briskly dispenses with this complaint. 'There need be no cognitive component at all,' he says, 'in what it arouses in us: it may simply arouse the physiological and phenomenological components of an emotion.' In other words, 'a sad piece of music need only arouse the feeling of pity; not pity *about* anything in particular' (p. 328).⁵ Clearly, much depends for Matravers on his distinction between emotions and feelings. Is it a distinction, however, to which we ought to assent?

Matravers' attempt to establish certain phenomenological and physiological responses as characteristic is particularly futile. Our neural capacities, after all, constitute far too blunt an instrument for distinguishing particular types from among the widely varied range of emotional response.⁶ In other words, tickles, twinges and pains, quickened heartbeats and surges of adrenalin cannot by themselves generate emotional character. Of course, Matravers himself is not claiming that phenomenological and physiological reactions constitute an emotion. But they *do* constitute a feeling, which for him can be sad or fearful or angry, even though it is *about* nothing. Having denied his claim, it is now important to mount an argument against it.

In the *Physics*, Aristotle describes movement as 'a sort of actuality', or activity, 'but incomplete' (*Physics* 201b, 31; trans. Hardie and Gaye). He repeats this in *De Anima*, referring to movement as 'an imperfect kind' of activity or 'an activity of what is imperfect' (*De Anima* 417a, 16; 431a, 6; trans. J. A. Smith).⁷ The incompleteness or imperfection of movements, considered as such, is a matter of their occurring for the sake of something else, something more ultimate. That more ultimate something is some complete, perfected activity. According to D. W. Hamlyn, the term 'activity', as used by Aristotle, is 'equivalent, where people ... are being talked about, to the term "behaviour."⁸ If movement is incomplete activity, then, occurring for the sake of something else, behaviour, that further end for the sake of which movements occur, is complete activity, containing its own end within itself. Elsewhere, Hamlyn characterizes the relation between sensation and perception in a similar way, maintaining that 'it is necessary to separate questions about sensations entirely from questions about the ways in which we perceive things. To say of someone that he has a sensation does not ordinarily commit one to view that he has perceived anything at all.'⁹ In Aristotle's terms, that is, sensation by itself is an incomplete or imperfect activity that is completed or perfected only by evolving into some full-fledged perception.

What I want to suggest is that feelings are to emotions as sensations are to perceptions and movements to behaviour. By themselves, they are incom-

plete, imperfect, unintelligible. Thus, if they occur merely as a response to some stimulus or other, the fact of their occurrence can be noted, but not characterized.¹⁰ Characterizability, intelligibility, proceeds from an incomplete activity's counting as an element of a complete activity. If I am right, the consequences are grave for Matravers' account. For it would follow that we cannot talk, as he claims we can, about feelings that are sad, fearful or angry but not sad, fearful or angry *about* anything. The cognitive component is necessary in order to complete the activity of which a feeling can be a part but in the absence of which it is only a characterless reaction.¹¹

If Matravers is duly compelled to abandon the notion of feelings with emotional qualities that are yet *about* nothing, then much else collapses in its wake. Without this crucial intermediate stage, the arguments that he presents fail as solutions to the alleged problems that the arousal theory has in accommodating, first, the frequent disparity between emotions expressed and emotions caused and, second, the expressive power of contentless art. Even more than this is at stake, however. For if the point of my appeal to Aristotle and Hamlyn prevails, then it follows that whereas causal accounts (in the mechanical sense) can be given of movements, sensations and feelings, no such causal account can be given of complete activities, like behaviour, perception or emotion.¹² As Hamlyn insists, there is no controlling mechanism of behaviour. Accordingly, if the analogy I have attempted to draw holds, then we can likewise conclude that whereas a feeling can be accounted for in terms of a causal mechanism, an emotion cannot. To the extent that an arousal theory is a version of causal theory, then, its limitations, at least as a theory of the emotions, ought to be apparent.

IV. POSSESSION OR PROJECTION?

In the introductory section of his article, Matravers claims that 'we apply the term "sad" to situations that cause sadness ...' (p. 322). The clear implication is that *because* situations cause sadness, we call them sad. They are sad, that is, only insofar as they cause me to *be* sad. Later, he remarks that '[i]f I see that someone else is sad, this will tend to make me feel sad' (p. 324). Now, this is a significant change. In the latter instance, my feeling sad is incidental to, rather than constitutive of, the sadness of the person in question. The likelihood of my feeling sad *proceeds from* my recognition of the other person's sadness, just as my recognition of his sadness *proceeds from* his *being* sad.

What, then, is the role of causation for Matravers? His initial view is that the emotion caused in us determines the emotion, or more, what we would *call* the emotion, of the other person. The crucial concept on Matravers' later view, however, is recognition, not emotional effect. And recognition, of course, presupposes the notion of some recognizable object or aspect.

This confusion is apparent, too, when he turns his attention from people to works of art. 'According to the arousal theory,' Matravers writes, 'what makes us attribute a feeling or emotion to a work of art is the related feeling

or emotion it arouses in us' (p. 329). And yet, a mere four paragraphs prior to this statement, he insists that 'there are some properties of the work which cause us to react in the way we do', and that 'this is what makes the work express the feeling or emotion we ascribe to it' (p. 328). Which is it finally to be for Matravers? Is expressive character a matter of recognition or effect, of the possession of properties or the projection of our own emotions?¹³

We know that his considered opinion is that expression is not simply a matter of brute emotional response. Instead, the emotions we ascribe to a work are mediated by a feeling that that work directly causes. Thus, in order to determine the expressive character of a work of art I need simply ask myself a couple of questions. First, what emotion is it that I experience upon attending to a particular work? And second, what is the feeling that lies at the heart of that full-fledged emotion? According to Matravers, the work expresses the full-fledged emotional version of that feeling, such that the expressed emotion is likely to be, or at least possibly *can* be, different from the experienced emotion. Thus, if I experience pity upon attending to a particular work, and if the feeling of sadness lies at the heart of pity, then the work itself expresses the full-fledged emotion of sadness.

For Matravers, then, aesthetic response is a decidedly mechanical matter of identifying the emotion aroused within oneself, isolating within that emotion its elemental feeling-content and ascribing to the instigating work the full-fledged emotional version of that feeling.¹⁴ But even though this is the characterization to which Matravers is committed, it is one that he protests. Admitting to having claimed throughout 'that the grounds we have for saying that a work expresses a certain feeling or emotion lies in our response to it', Matravers insists that what this means is that the object of critical study 'is not the response, but *the way in which the response is caused*' (p. 329. My emphasis.). Since he immediately adds, however, that this does not entail that the critic 'will be engaged in a dispassionate enquiry into a mechanism', he must mean by the phrase, 'the way in which the response is caused', not the *process* by which the response is caused, but simply those *properties* that the work has that ensure a characteristic response (p. 329).

In the space of two sentences, in other words, Matravers reaffirms his belief that our ascription of emotional qualities to works of art is a matter of response while insisting that what matters is neither the response itself nor the causal path we might trace backwards to the work on the basis of that response, but rather the properties of the work itself. Elaborating, he adds that 'the critic will need to distance himself from emotional engagement with the work in order to keep a clear head' (p. 329). But any claim that the expressive character of a work can be determined *apart from* any experienced emotion is surely a remarkable concession for one who purports to defend the arousal theory.

At turns throughout his article, Matravers flirts with an unadorned version of the arousal theory, making statements that could well stand as slogans for what he elsewhere derides as simple emotivism (p. 327). This is either sheer

carelessness on his part or it reveals a genuine ambivalence about the position to which he has committed himself. He espouses without embracing the arousal theory, defends it while disavowing its most obvious implications, positing the very claims from which he subsequently retreats. To retreat from what I have referred to as the brute version of arousal theory is, of course, no bad thing, but since Matravers portrays himself as a steadfast arousal theorist, the question is whether, in the face of his many concessions, the version he is left to defend is duly dependent upon any notion of arousal.

V. CHARACTERISTICNESS

Matravers' first attempt to amend the arousal theory while remaining committed to it was to posit the notion of intermediate feelings. Although a promising strategy for maintaining the theory while avoiding its more naïve assumptions, it nevertheless proved fraught with difficulties. His second attempt, meanwhile, involved drawing attention away from our responses to works of art and redirecting it at those works' own properties. Although the intuitions behind this amendment are commendable, however, they contribute to a reframing of the theory that is so radical as to leave us with no arousal theory at all. Still, a final option remains for Matravers, namely, that which centres on the notion of characteristicness. On this view, expressive character is to be accounted for neither in terms of my particular emotional responses nor my characteristic responses, but of the characteristic responses to which people in general tend.

Matravers treats the notion of characteristicness as if it were interchangeable with those of appropriateness (p. 327) and correctness (p. 323).¹⁵ But is it? On the naïve, brute version of the arousal theory, it clearly is not. For just as the causal theory of perception, according to Hamlyn, 'is meant to guarantee the correctness of our perceptions', so the brute version would presume to guarantee the correctness of our emotional responses.¹⁶ After all, if our perceptions are caused by what we perceive and our emotions by features, objects and situations to which we react, then, provided that all our sensory and cortical equipment is intact, there is no room for mistakes on our part. And yet, to recall Hamlyn, 'where there is no room for error, there is no place for talk of correctness either'.¹⁷ We simply respond as we respond. But the more pressing question for us is whether Matravers' reconstituted version of the arousal theory is any more able to account for the notion of correctness.

Matravers might well object to my characterizing his argument's development from an emphasis on human response to an emphasis on the properties of the work as a retreat. Indeed, he might scarcely regard it as a development, or shift, at all. His interest in properties, he might argue, concerns less the properties themselves and more their relation to our sensory and cortical equipment. Thus, he could claim that the only retreat of which he is guilty is that from an interest in *our tendency to be aroused* to an interest in *the tendency*

of various formal and material properties to arouse us. Whatever move is made, then, is made firmly within the ambit of arousal theory. However, whether we are concerned with the emotions with which people tend characteristically to react to a work or the emotions that the work characteristically tends to prompt in people, our interest is in what *generally* is the case, what *more often than not* results. Here a distinction is called for. One might say that, where responses are concerned, frequency is everything, so that what counts as correct, in the radically attenuated sense of conforming to a general tendency, will vary as statistics vary. Where objects are concerned, however, statistical findings cannot disturb the status of features that count as characteristic. *That* is a matter of grammar.

To accuse Matravers of illicitly collapsing the notions of possession and projection, of the properties of objects and the responses of people, is in effect to charge him with confusing grammatical with statistical characterisicness. But as Gordon Baker and Peter Hacker observe, an account that depends upon the tendencies of people to respond in certain ways 'wrongly assimilates the *normative* notion of following a rule correctly with the statistical notion of acting in the same way as most people are disposed to do in such-and-such conditions'.¹⁸ Indeed, it would be pointless to attempt to adjust such an account so that it would dictate that the correct following of a rule consists in acting as most *competent* followers of that rule act. For the very notion of competence is parasitic upon that of correct use.

When Matravers concludes that the expressive character of works of art is not a matter of our responses after all, but of the properties of the work, it is reasonable to charge him with having abandoned the arousal theory altogether. On the other hand, his attention to the notion of *characteristic* response permits him to defend a version of the arousal theory that is not prone to many of the shortcomings to which that theory's more brute form is prey. And yet, the modest advances embodied in his version of the theory fail to account for all that Matravers assumes that they can, above all, the ineluctably normative dimension of aesthetic response.¹⁹

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NOTES

¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*. Cyril Barrett (ed.) (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 17 and 11, Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art* (Indianapolis:

Hackett Publishing Co., 1968; second edition 1976), p. 245; Peter Kivy, *Music Alone: Philosophical Reflections on the Purely Musical Experience* (Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1990), pp. 31 and 68. See also R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (Oxford: Oxford U.P.,

- 1938), especially pp. 29–36, Roger Scruton, *Art and Imagination* (London: Methuen, 1974), pp. 20, 47, 48, 71, 77 and 246, and Arthur Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (London: Harvard U.P., 1981), pp. 175 and 191
- ² Kivy, *op. cit.*, p. 169
- ³ Derek Matravers, 'Art and the Feelings and Emotions', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 31 (1991), pp. 322–31. Henceforth, all references to Matravers' article will be cited parenthetically in the text.
- ⁴ For related discussions, see Kivy, *Music Alone*, *op. cit.*, p. 177, and Daniel A. Putnam, 'Why Instrumental Music Has No Shame', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 27 (1987), pp. 55–61
- ⁵ Notice the slip that Matravers makes here. In exploiting his distinction between emotions and feelings to counter the objection about the arousal theory's apparent inability to accommodate contentless art, he at once undermines it. In this passage, he is saying that sadness in music, short of causing the emotion of pity, can yet cause the feeling of pity. However, his earlier effort to acknowledge that musically aroused emotions, even if not the same as the emotion expressed in the work, are related to that expressed emotion, depended on the notion of an intermediary, in the form of a feeling that directly reflected that expressed emotion. Thus, a sad work could cause a sad feeling, vindicating, in turn, the arousal theorist's most elemental instinct but also bridging the gap between emotion expressed and emotion caused. For at the heart of the new, fully fledged emotion of pity would be the feeling of sadness. Now, however, he is talking about an artistic expression of sadness causing the feeling of pity. He can only do this, though, at the expense of forsaking that crucial intermediary.
- ⁶ Consider Matravers' own example of Keats' poem, 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci', which he claims is expressive of a 'sickly romantic melancholy' (p. 326). On the basis of what full-fledged emotion would one ascribe such a quality? What feeling mediates the expressive quality of the poem and my emotional response to it?
- ⁷ Both translations are included in Richard McKeon (ed), *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941)
- ⁸ D. W. Hamlyn, in V. C. Chappell (ed.), *The Philosophy of Mind Behaviour*, (Englewood Cliffs; Prentice-Hall, 1962), p. 62.
- ⁹ D. W. Hamlyn, *The Psychology of Perception* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), p. 34
- ¹⁰ Perhaps it would be more precise to say that they could be quantitatively characterized (for example, a persistent pain, a brief tickle), but not qualitatively. However, this distinction is itself not as precise as we would like. How, after all, would we classify the description of a feeling as intense? Is intensity a quantitative or a qualitative notion?
- ¹¹ Aaron Ridley makes a similar objection, although he is more willing than I to entertain the possibility that some feelings can have an emotional character without being about anything; Aaron Ridley, 'Pitiful Responses to Music', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 33 (1993), p. 73. One of the more compelling arguments in support of the notion of objectless feelings that can yet claim the character of an emotion is advanced by Daniel A. Putnam. As with some higher mammals in zoos, Putnam argues, anxiety can become a generalized state of the human organism. For Putnam, that the state is generalized appears to mean that it is objectless, whereas I would argue that it is reasonable to suppose that the object that the anxiety takes is simply exceedingly general. Putnam cautions that this sort of response entails an ambiguous understanding of 'object' which can only be resolved by distinguishing between objects and causes. He elaborates this by saying that 'though it may be the historical cause, one would not call a rotten home environment that causes anxiety the "object" of a current anxiety about heights, Putnam, *op. cit.*, p. 58. Of course, one would not. But then Putnam's own remark shows why, for the heights to which he refers constitute the object of the anxiety, what the anxiety is about. Putnam admits that objectless feelings usually 'find' an object, 'but the feeling can exist prior to that', *ibid.*, p. 55

However, I would interpret this as meaning that what Putnam takes to be objectless feelings only *appear* to be so, and that whatever emotional character they can be said to have is in fact due to the object at which they are directed, however subconsciously. Thus Kivy writes, '[e]ven the ordinary emotions such as sadness, hope, and the like sometimes (if infrequently) lack objects, at least temporarily'; Kivy, *Music Alone*, op. cit., p. 165; my emphasis. In principle, that is, the object of an emotion is determinable, whether readily or eventually. See Kivy, *Music Alone*, pp. 165 ff and 175 ff.

¹² In this connection, see also Max Hocutt, 'Aristotle's Four Because', *Philosophy*, Vol. 49 (1974), pp. 385-99.

¹³ For brevity and clarity's sake, I will leave this distinction as it stands. One should be advised, however, that it presents us with a false dichotomy. For neither the notion of projection nor that of possession can accommodate the central insights of one of the most satisfying accounts of aesthetic judgement, namely, Scruton's affective theory, as elaborated in *Art and Imagination*.

For Scruton, aesthetic qualities are neither projected nor possessed, but perceived. They are not properties, but *aspects*, of the work.

¹⁴ Thus Ridley refers to Matravers' account of aesthetic response as involving inference. See Ridley, op. cit., p. 73. Matravers objects to this characterization in his 'Once More With Feeling: A Reply to Ridley', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 34 (1994), p. 175.

¹⁵ This enthusiasm for the normative is also evident in Matravers, 'Once More With Feeling: A Reply to Ridley', op. cit., pp. 174-75.

¹⁶ Hamlyn, *The Psychology of Perception*, op. cit., p. 92.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, *Scepticism, Rules and Language* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), p. 71.

¹⁹ My thanks to Aaron Ridley for kindly forwarding relevant written material to me and to Alex Neill and Garry Hagberg for their remarks and criticism. Thanks also to Claudine Herlihy for her help in preparing this final version.

FICTION, EMOTION, AND RATIONALITY

E. M. Dadlez

WE SOMETIMES respond emotionally to fictions. How does it come about that fictions can so engage the imagination as to arouse fear, pity, or anger towards something in whose existence we do not believe? Are such reactions rational?

Since the mid-seventies, such questions have been repeatedly posed in the philosophical literature. In particular, Colin Radford's ascription of irrationality to pity for Anna Karenina has prompted a barrage of attempted refutation, amply attested by the sheer regularity with which his responses to critics appear in philosophical journals.¹ Implicit in many of these investigations are certain assumptions about what emotions are and how they should be characterized. That such assumptions are seldom made explicit has, I think, obscured some of the most important aspects of this dialogue behind a series of exchanges based on incompatible premises about the nature of emotion. It is crucial to begin any investigation of alleged irrationality in responses to fiction by discovering what such reactions have in common with, and what distinguishes them from, instances of emotional response to less ontologically problematic phenomena.

My investigations will focus exclusively on those accounts of emotion which permit the ascription of rationality or irrationality to an emotional response. Theories which maintain that emotions have cognitive constituents or concomitants are the most suitable candidates, as Alex Neill has recently pointed out.² For this reason, such theories will provide a foundation for much of my discussion. The intention here is not to establish emotions as cognitive. Rather, cognitive accounts of emotion will be brought to bear on an investigation of Colin Radford's claim that our emotional responses to fiction are irrational. Such a claim can only make sense against a backdrop of assumptions which permit us to hold that there is some cognitive element of emotion which can be consistent or inconsistent with reason. Once a set of candidate criteria for irrationality in emotion is established, an investigation of the claim that our emotional responses to fiction are irrational will be attempted. It will be my contention that such a claim cannot be supported either on the basis of an analogy drawn to comparison cases or on the basis of a more general allegation of inconsistency.

I. EMOTIONS, COGNITION, AND IRRATIONALITY

The heritage of many cognitivist accounts of emotion can be found in the work of Aristotle, whose views might be taken to ally emotions with ways of conceiving objects and situations. In the *Rhetoric*, certain emotions are said to take certain objects. Contempt, for instance, takes an object one considers or believes unimportant.³ In *De Anima*, Aristotle stresses that emotions are neither purely cognitive nor purely physiological.⁴ The criteria which distinguish justifiable from unjustifiable emotions are described in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Excessive or inappropriate anger is said sometimes to involve the mistaken or unjustified apprehension of an offense.⁵ In each case, there is a focus on the subject's *apprehension* of an object or situation, a focus that has re-emerged in the work of Anthony Kenny, who claims that a given emotion is necessarily tied to a certain restricted range of epistemic objects. It is not possible, for Kenny, to feel remorse for or about something in which one did not believe one had played a part, or to envy the possession of some object one already believed oneself to possess.⁶ As Irving Thalberg states, each sort of emotion requires a particular cognitive consort. Emotions with objects are logically tied to some form of thought about the object.⁷ Robert C. Solomon, for instance, identifies this thought with normative judgement.⁸

In some of the most interesting contemporary accounts, emotions are said to involve 'construals' or evaluations of objects or situations.⁹ This approach makes considerable sense of our tendency to refer to certain emotional responses as irrational or unjustified, since we often ascribe unreasonableness to the evaluations of others. Indeed, the very fact that we frequently speak of emotions in this way is often adduced as evidence for the claim that they are, at least in part, cognitive.¹⁰ How could we call someone's anger *irrational* if it were merely a biochemical reaction over which that individual had not the slightest control? How could we consider an overprotective parent's dire foreboding about an offspring's plight unreasonable, if there were nothing *in* or about the emotion itself to which reason could appeal?

Consider the following example, which presents an account of emotion as construal. To take umbrage at someone's behaviour might be described in terms of construing that behaviour as rude and disrespectful. Let us say that Smith takes umbrage at the familiarity of his younger colleague Jones, who addresses Smith by his first name during the course of a philosophical dispute. Smith construes Jones' familiarity as disrespectful. Such treatment, Smith feels, is incommensurate with his stature in the philosophical community. Were I to call Smith's emotional response irrational (in the context of accounts which identify emotions with construals), I would be taking issue with Smith's construal of Jones' behaviour as a manifestation of disrespect, or taking issue with Smith's notion about what kinds of behaviour constitute rudeness, or perhaps taking issue with Smith's assessment of the *degree* of

disrespect involved. Usually, I would be questioning either Smith's appraisal or the grounds for it.

A number of philosophers would identify Smith's construal with a belief about Jones' behaviour. For instance, Solomon might say that Smith made a hasty and dogmatic normative judgement about Jones and her behaviour, since it is his contention that judgements are embedded in emotional responses.¹¹ The assessment of rationality might, in this case, involve an attempt to discover whether or not such a belief was justified.¹² If characterized as constituents of emotion or identified outright with emotions, unjustified beliefs could, on some accounts, invite the ascription of irrationality to the emotion itself.

What of an affective response to which no existentially committed belief could be said to correspond? If existential commitment is necessary for emotion, the response could not be characterized as emotional. Alex Neill has focused on this as a central difficulty in explicating our response to fiction,¹³ and such criteria have been adopted by several philosophers who discuss these responses, Kendall Walton among them.¹⁴ Acceptance of such a view dissolves Radford's charge of irrationality. There would no longer be an emotion against which the charge could be levelled. If Smith's state lacked a cognitive constituent, how could we speak of its irrationality, as distinct from its *non-rationality*? It is not clear that it is permissible to impugn the rationality or coherence of a set of physiological symptoms, for instance. What could there be *in* the state or condition that could be held inconsistent with some proposition the subject believed? However, while Radford's allegation of irrationality suggests the adoption of a cognitive view of emotion, accounts which identify the cognitive constituent of emotion with existentially committed belief are not the only alternative. Radford himself appears to reject these, and to hold only that existentially committed belief is necessary for *rationality* in emotion. Given this, and given that the present discussion is concerned with the question of rationality in emotion rather than necessary conditions for emotion in general, the aforementioned cognitive account of emotion will be reserved for future papers. It is, in fact, possible to maintain that emotion is cognitive without mandating existentially committed belief as the constituent cognition.

For instance, it has been convincingly argued that we cannot rule out the possibility of construals or evaluations associated with emotion which occur in the absence of corresponding existentially committed beliefs.¹⁵ In accounts that make such proposals, construal appears to involve the ascription of a property in imagination. Smith may *imagine* of Jones that she is disrespectful without *believing* that Jones is disrespectful.

Hume, I think, described it best when he contrasted inferences drawn on the basis of general rules with those drawn on the basis of habitual associations. The former are ascribed to the judgement and the latter to the imagination in an example of an inconsistent emotional response.¹⁶ The occupant of

an iron cage suspended from a tower cannot forebear trembling when he surveys the precipice below him, though he knows himself safe and has had every assurance of security. Despite such knowledge and assurance, 'his imagination runs away with its object, and excites a passion proportioned to it'.¹⁷ He construes his situation as dangerous (he imagines of the situation that it is dangerous) but does not believe that it is.

Certainly, those who take evaluative beliefs to be necessary constituents of emotions will try to argue that Hume's subject cannot *know* himself safe if he is afraid. The subject might be thought to focus his beliefs on remote possibilities, since a fall is not absolutely out of the question. He might be thought to have all the evidence a reasonable man could ask for that he is safe without drawing the prescribed conclusion. Such critics might point out that their disinclination to take literally Hume's claim that the subject *knows* himself safe has some support from Hume. Elsewhere in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume speaks of ill-founded emotions in a somewhat different way, and suggests that 'passions can be contrary to reason only so far as they are accompany'd with some judgement or opinion'.¹⁸

Yet Robert C. Roberts, Cheshire Calhoun, and others offer convincing examples in support of the view that construals linked to emotional response need not be accompanied by corresponding existentially committed judgements.¹⁹ These cases roughly resemble that of Hume's caged man, illustrating an imaginative misconstruction independent of belief. Calhoun and Roberts, although some of their terminology differs, make similar points and even employ some of the same metaphors. Both speak of construal in terms of 'seeing as', of bringing some concept or image to bear on an object or situation²⁰ (e.g. if I have contempt for a politician, I may see that individual as greedy and dishonest). Both also compare misconstruals occurring in the absence of some corresponding belief to optical illusions.²¹

Let us consider the further adventures of Smith, who so recently took umbrage at the familiarity of Jones. Smith, the purchaser of a new personal computer whose workings remain largely a mystery to him, has just finished typing the first draft of his *magnum opus*. It is due at the publisher the very next day. Smith carefully positions his mouse, and clicks on the print command. Nothing happens. He clicks again. Nothing. A frenzied perusal of several manuals follows, to no avail. The cursor blinks in malign satisfaction, impervious to Smith's salvage attempts. Smith grows enraged. He smashes his fist down on the keyboard. 'Stupid machine!' he yells (just as he yells at his car when it stalls).

Let us absolve Smith of any unjustified beliefs about sentient computers. He does not believe that inanimate objects can be guilty of either malicious obstructionism or incompetence. He does, however, respond as if he did believe this. Roberts and Calhoun might suggest that Smith *sees* the computer as culpable or malicious, even though he would disavow any such judgement.

The computer seems so to him, he so construes it, despite his firm belief that inanimate objects cannot possess such properties.

Yet if Smith's construal of his computer is not a belief, what is it? In some sense, Smith entertains a thought about the computer, one which might even be specified propositionally. My own inclination is to suggest that Smith entertains the thought in imagination. It might be held that Smith imagines of the computer that it is culpably obstructive. Thus, construal becomes an act of interpretation or property ascription to which one's degree of commitment may vary. To construe may be to believe, or may be merely to imagine. The construal need not be considered wholly involuntary, though it is clear that construals like Smith's cannot involve extensive deliberation.

Here is another possible ground, then, for ascribing irrationality to an emotional response. Holding a belief that denies the substance of the construal linked to the emotion, that contradicts or denies the property ascription the construal makes, suggests irrationality in an emotion. To rehearse the grounds for an ascription of irrationality to emotion, I return briefly to the case of Smith. It is irrational for Smith to feel rage toward his computer when he misconstrues it as a morally culpable agent. If such a construal were to take the form of a belief, Smith's belief (and his anger, for those claiming belief is a constituent of emotion or those identifying belief with emotion) could clearly be labelled irrational. If, as in Hume's example, Smith's construal is at odds with his belief (Smith does not *believe* the computer is a morally responsible agent, but nevertheless imaginatively construes it that way) we might consider adducing irrationality on the ground of inconsistency, since what Smith believes of his computer is inconsistent with what he imagines of it.

One other possibility remains, for those who wish to deny that we can ever characterize beliefs as constituents of emotion. Here, it might be held that emotions are only rational to the extent that they are *consistent* with beliefs. Thus, a fear of Martian invasion could be held rational if a subject (unreasonably, let's hope) believed such an invasion were imminent. On such an account, the belief could be held irrational while the subject's fear was not. This, of course, yields different results from those obtained by considering the belief a constituent of emotion (in this latter case, the fear could be deemed irrational on account of considering its constituent cognition—the belief—irrational). The former approach also differs from any treatment which permits us to characterize the emotion as a construal which *can* be existentially committed, and for this reason appears to multiply cognitions unnecessarily. If the construal identified with an emotional response *cannot* be a belief (through it must retain the capacity to be at odds with belief), we would have to ascribe a duality of cognitions to every emotional response. Each emotion, rational or irrational, would involve two evaluations or construals of its object: one of these a belief, the other a thought of some sort (since we could not

speak of sensations or biochemical reactions as items whose consistency with a belief we were in any position to assess).

The preceding survey has provided us with several criteria for the identification of irrationality in emotion. Depending on the specific cognitive account of emotion adopted, we may consider an emotion irrational when what is held to be a constituent belief is irrational, or when the construal associated with the emotion is at odds with what is believed of the intentional object.

II. FICTIONAL EVENTS AND IRRATIONAL EMOTIONS

Alarms blare and sparks fly as the spaceship officer, sweaty and battered, shoulders a flamethrower and staggers through a doorway. A series of explosions shatters the flight console, hurling Ripley against the wall. I lean forward in my theatre seat, engrossed in the film, terrified that the titular and wholly unprepossessing alien lurks around the next bend of the corridor. This is more exciting than *Star Wars*, the hero more emotionally riveting than Skywalker. And the protagonist is even cast against type: she is a woman.

Undoubtedly, I am responding emotionally to the film. I fear for Ripley. I am distressed by her plight: trapped aboard a spaceship with only a hostile alien and an understandably irritable cat for company. I admire Ripley's courage and resourcefulness. I exhibit many of the physiological symptoms of fear and some of the behaviour associated with it. My pulse rate is up. I yell when the alien makes an unannounced entrance. This is, in fact, not an unusual response to *Alien*, a film that was calculated to terrorize, and succeeded admirably in the endeavour.

The fact that such experiences are usual can raise several interesting philosophical questions in itself, the most pertinent of which has been repeatedly asked by Colin Radford.²² How can I be moved by this improbable space opera? How can I fear for Ripley when I do not believe that she exists? My emotional engagement is irrational (albeit benignly), according to Radford. To pity or to fear for an entity which one is certain does not exist involves one in inconsistency and incoherence.

Different grounds for the ascription of irrationality to an emotion have been canvassed. Can irrationality in emotional response to fiction be established on their basis? In the above example, my beliefs do not appear to pose a problem. I believe that, fictionally, there is a woman named Ripley who is in danger. I do not believe that I am contemplating actual events, nor do I believe that a heroic fighter of aliens named Ripley exists. I have not mistakenly ascribed Ripley's experiences to the actress who portrays her. In short, I am aware that I am dealing with a fiction. I even, for those who wish to identify emotions outright with evaluative judgements, have justified evaluative beliefs which might be thought to ground or constitute a part of my emotional

response: I believe that to be trapped with a hostile and cunning adversary of superior powers is dangerous, for instance.²³ None of the beliefs related to my experience of the fiction appears to be unreasonable. Those who assess rationality in emotion solely by assessing the evaluative and other beliefs thought (in part) to compose or accompany emotion would probably exonerate our responses to fictions from charges of inconsistency on this basis. But the kinds of emotional responses such criteria rule irrational are not involved in the cases to which Radford has drawn attention. Many of Radford's writings suggest that it is when an emotional response is at odds with what is believed to be the case that the difficulty arises.²⁴

Being moved by fictions seems far more comparable to situations of the kind described by Hume, Roberts, and Calhoun, which display an opposition between what is imagined and what is believed. Radford's own comparisons appear to suggest this. In one paper, he compares our being moved by fictions to a child's fear of a stuffed tiger in a museum. The child *knows* that the tiger is stuffed, but fears it nonetheless.²⁵ The parallels to cases of irrationality discussed in the preceding section are obvious. Radford might claim, for instance, that when we are moved by fictions we have (without believing them real) construed fictional situations as real ones. Just as Smith construed his computer as culpable without believing it, I might be thought to construe, for example, a fictional instance of danger as a real one, despite having no mistaken beliefs about the ontological status of fictional situations. In both cases there appears to be a kind of error, for the computer is not believed capable of deliberate malice, and the fictional danger is not believed to be actual.

The parallels are not as clear as they appear at first glance, however. The examples given by those who propose such an account of irrational emotion always involve imaginative construal of *actual* objects or events in terms of attributes they are believed not to possess or scenarios they are believed not to resemble. Roberts, for instance, mentions a case in which someone *looks* guilty to the agent (is imaginatively endowed with guilt by the agent) even though she is not believed to be.²⁶ Here, the charge of irrationality is levelled precisely because there is an imaginative misascription of a quality (guilt, culpability) or scenario (that of a guilty party) to an object or situation whose properties are incompatible with the projection. Similarly, the child's fear of the stuffed tiger is thought irrational because dangerousness is misascribed to an entity which we are told is *known* to be incapable of possessing any such quality. Note that the charge of irrationality is never levelled because actuality or existence in the real world is imaginatively misascribed to the purely imaginary.

The properties whose misascription seems central to the identification of an irrational emotion are those with some variety of analytic connection to the emotion. Fear is linked with the construal of a situation as dangerous, taking

umbrage with the construal of behaviour as insulting. That is, the properties ascribed (e.g. danger) are essential to the emotion (e.g. fear). Perhaps it may be held that existence is a necessary condition for the rational ascription of properties (even a purely imaginative ascription), i.e. that *any* construal must involve existential commitment to its object in order to be rational.²⁷

Yet this makes the contemplation of possible or hypothetical events highly suspect. Consider that we frequently entertain hypothetical events in imagination without being existentially committed to any aspect of them. To say that I contemplate a hypothetical event or scene does not necessitate my being a player in it, nor does it require feature roles for anyone with whom I am acquainted or even of whose existence I am aware. I might be an environmentalist who worries about the plight of merely *possible* future generations (the depletion of the ozone layer might have more fatal effects than currently suspected), and construe their environmentally hazardous hypothetical situation as distressing. Consider further that construals are usually taken as necessary but insufficient for an emotional response. On this account, any vivid imaginative construal could suggest irrationality, whether or not it involved emotion.

This creates difficulties. I can imagine the way a government might be (in no particular country or time) and construe it as effective, if improbable. In ethics, hypothetical cases are frequently entertained in thought experiments aimed at considering what would follow from various assumptions. Indeed, our response to imagined cases (though it is seldom a full-blown emotion) is often taken as revelatory of the assumed principle's success or failure.²⁸ Are such imaginings *irrational*? Surely the alliance of rationality with a dearth of imagination is a less than happy one.

It might be responded that only those construals that are constituents of emotions can be correctly judged irrational on the basis of a lack of existential commitment. Yet what could warrant the attribution of inconsistency only to those isolated cases? It is difficult to find grounds for such a distinction. It seems that emotional responses directed toward fictional events and characters cannot be considered irrational on account of their lack of existential commitment without thereby jettisoning the rationality of undeniably respectable construals.

Granted, when I construe Ripley's situation *vis-à-vis* the alien as dangerous, I know that it is not the case that there *is* a woman named Ripley who is in danger, even though that is what I imagine. However, the property ascription is not what is central to my denial. The stuffed-animal phobic denies that there is a stuffed tiger that is dangerous, but he does not deny that there is a stuffed tiger. There is a disparity between construals of fictional events and the comparison cases of irrational response that were ventured earlier (Smith and his computer, the stuffed tiger). These comparison cases involve existential commitment to one term of the construal, whereas responses to fiction do not.

Consider that there is a difference between imagining *of* some existing thing that it has a certain property and imagining *that* there is something with a certain property. If it were possible to demonstrate such a distinction in logical form,²⁹ the contrast might be illustrated by the following:

Case 1

There is a stuffed tiger of which S imagines that it is dangerous and of which he believes that it is not the case that it is dangerous:

$$(\exists x)[Tx \ \& \ Im(S, Dx) \ \& \ Bel(S, \neg Dx)]$$

Case 2

S imagines that there is a space alien that is dangerous and S believes that it's not the case that there's an alien that's dangerous.

$$Im[S, (\exists x)(Ax \ \& \ Dx)] \ \& \ Bel[S, \neg(\exists x)(Ax \ \& \ Dx)]$$

Case 2 involves no projection of the imaginary unto the real since the existential quantifier is within the scope of 'imagines that' and thus avoids contradicting the belief. In Case 1, what is imagined about a real thing is denied in the corresponding belief about the same real thing. Case 1 recalls the kind of situation that Hume described: a case in which one's emotional response to an actual situation is governed by what one imagines of it, despite one's belief to the contrary.

It is debatable, however, whether Case 1 represents a condition sufficient for the ascription of irrationality to any construal, whether emotional or not. Imaginative construals of actual objects in terms of properties those objects do not possess can seem blameless. I can imagine what it would be like if I were the greatest fencer in the world (the fame, the product endorsements, the complementary equipment from Santelli) or what it would be like to win the lottery without thereby rendering myself liable to charges of irrationality.

Case 1 may instead provide a necessary condition for the ascription of irrationality. In particular situations, the imaginative projection of a property onto an object not believed to possess it seems clearly irrational. In the case of Smith and his computer, for instance, Smith's imaginative projection alters his attitude and behaviour towards the object of his construal. He bellows abuse at the computer. He strikes it. Yet he does not believe it is a responsible or responsive agent for all that his behaviour and attitude towards an object in the real world have been altered by what he imagines. In other words, apparent evidence of irrationality is closely linked to just those features of response that are frequently identified as constituents or concomitants of emotion: attitudes of approval and disapproval, certain behaviours and physical reactions, dispositions to act.

Two points should be made in regard to the preceding observation. First, the claim that *emotional* construals which take the form of Case 1 (i.e. imaginative

projections of a property onto a real object believed not to possess it) are irrational does not commit us to the view that any imaginative construal whatsoever is irrational, for many emotional imaginative construals take the form of Case 2 and involve no inconsistency, and many construals which take the form of Case 1 do not involve a change of attitude and behaviour toward a real object on account of properties it is not believed to possess. Second, it is not clear that attitudes of approval or disapproval, desires and aversions, and dispositions are in themselves inevitable indicators of emotion, for there remain many disputes in the literature about whether these are emotions, are only necessary constituents of emotions, or are simply frequent concomitants of emotion.

Given the above concerns, it seems prudent to suggest that Case 1 provides us with a necessary but not a sufficient criterion for irrationality in an imaginative construal. A sketch of conditions which prove both necessary and sufficient for an ascription of irrationality would have to take into account an agent's perception or treatment of the object of the construal as dictated by that construal *rather* than by the agent's beliefs. So, for instance, imagining what it would be like if one were a genius (even though one did not believe oneself to be) could simply be a pleasant fantasy. Allegations of irrationality could be applicable to the case when something further was involved, when most criticisms of oneself and one's work were regarded as the products of envy or unsophistication, when the opinions of others were inevitably regarded as insignificant. Clearly, some unjustified beliefs are involved in my scenario, but irrationality in a construal need not rest on this alone. A failure to attend to the views and criticisms of others, a failure to be concerned about them, need not involve any obviously unjustified beliefs, nor need it involve full-blown emotion. Nevertheless, one's attitude towards the object of the imaginative construal (oneself) could be connected to such an attitude of unconcern and disregard. To reiterate, this is merely a sketch suggesting how one might go about establishing necessary and sufficient conditions for irrationality in an imaginative construal which takes the form of Case 1. The purpose of the present discussion is achieved by establishing the distinction between Cases 1 and 2 as a counter to any argument from analogy based on similarities between them.

Certain difficulties might still be raised in the case of fictions, however. To say that I fear for Ripley is to say that I construe her situation as dangerous. Yet I know there is no Ripley. My emotion and the construal identified with it appear to have no intentional object, and I'm fully aware of this. How can one construe nothing, fear for no one? Am I not contemplating screen images of events which I do not believe have occurred, events which I know are fakes, and construing *them* as dangerous? Is there not some fundamental inconsistency in this?

I think that the above does not accurately reflect what occurs when we are moved by fictions.

First, what is generally ascertainable about my particular situation *vis-à-vis* the fiction is my apprehension of a fictional world within whose boundaries certain propositions are true, e.g. that a woman named Ripley is trapped aboard a spacecraft with a hostile alien which has quite efficiently eradicated every other human being in its vicinity. It is perfectly apparent to all undistracted film viewers that this proposition is fictionally true, that such a state of affairs obtains within the world of the work. Naturally, some viewers will be more imaginatively engaged than others. For those who do not attend to the belief that they are contemplating a fiction (though they certainly would not deny it), there is, as per the hypotheses of David Novitz, a world they imagine.³⁰ Such a world may be one in which certain propositions are true which are neither true nor false in the world of the work, or at least which are never specifically indicated in the world of the work.³¹

For instance, I imagine Ripley's mental states on the basis of behavioural and situational cues given by states of affairs which obtain in the world of the work. I could, of course, watch a film of an actual event and make assumptions of the same sort about the mental states of its subject. The difference is this. I can be mistaken in my assumptions about the mental states of the actual person, even if my construals are consistent with behavioural and situational evidence. That my assumption may be a perfectly justifiable or reasonable one does not alter the possibility of its falsity. In the case of my assumptions about Ripley, however, provided that they are consistent with what is indicated in the world of the work (and perhaps provided that they *would* be less improbable than a variety of alternatives, were these events actually to occur³²), I *cannot* be mistaken in just this way. Consider the following example.

Both the imaginative assumption that Ripley's antipathy towards the alien is slightly greater than her fear, and the assumption that her fear is slightly greater than her antipathy seem equally consistent with evidence available in the world of the work. Of course, imaginative construals can be inconsistent with such evidence, e.g. the assumption that Ripley feels deep affection for the alien is inconsistent with all behavioural cues. The point is that an assumption consistent with the work's world, say an assumption about Ripley's fear very slightly exceeding her antipathy, cannot be verified, since it is neither true nor false in the world of *Alien*.

My reason for making the above distinction involves demonstrating the kind of irreducibility inherent in purely imaginative construals. To imagine the situation which is depicted in the final moments of the film *Alien* is to imagine an imperilled and frightened woman. My sympathetic fear for Ripley can be identified with the way such a thought or imagining is entertained. The thought we attend to—that of a woman being in perilous circumstances—involves the imagined instantiation of the kind of event that is believed dangerous. Construals involving fictions can be subject to criticism, of course, when they are inconsistent with the world of the work, when they are based on

flawed inferences from propositions that are true in that world. But when such inconsistencies do not arise, there is no further ground for allegations of inconsistency. My imagining a woman whose experience is unpleasant and perilous involves an existential quantification *within* the context of 'imagining that', not a quantification *into* it. I do not imagine of Sigourney Weaver, or of a screen image, or of a theoretical entity of literary criticism (having the same ontological status or lack thereof as would plots or themes)³³ that she or it is imperilled. I imagine an imperilled woman. As Peter Lamarque has suggested, talk of object-directedness in such cases seems to lead not to talk of one's thoughts (which are here entertained in imagination), but to talk of their *content*.³⁴ This is a content that, in the case of fiction, encompasses both the object and the property ascribed to it. A real property is not projected onto an imaginary entity, for it is imagined that a property is instantiated.

Furthermore, if imagining a woman in Ripley's situation prior to the advent of any danger (and thus prior to any emotion on my part, though I may construe Ripley as competent and intelligent, i.e. imagine a competent and intelligent woman) does not impugn my rationality, what further illegitimate manoeuvre is my imagination thought to conduct once the story progresses and I begin to fear for Ripley (i.e. imagine an imperilled woman)? To imagine Ripley's peril and thus construe her situation as dangerous surely involves the same kind of cognitive dynamic as imagining Ripley secure and construing her situation as safe. Whence the sudden onset of irrationality?

III. CONCLUSION

To say that we take fiction as real in imagination, despite our belief that it is not, seems most importantly a commentary on the vividness of our ability to grasp and contemplate hypothetical human situations. That such a construal can often comprise part of an emotional response adds nothing new to the picture. If the act of imagining a hypothetical human situation, and construing it in a particular way in doing so, is not irrational in itself, what further ground is left on the basis of which to call emotional responses to fictions irrational?

I suggest that our emotional responses to fiction need not invite an inevitable ascription of irrationality. First, for those who hold that some (justified) evaluative belief is necessary either for emotions as such, or for rational emotions (whether the belief in question is characterized as a necessary concomitant or a necessary constituent of emotion), it seems that appropriate candidates are available. My fear for Ripley does in fact involve the justified belief that to be stranded with a hostile adversary of superior powers is dangerous and unpleasant.

Second, I have attempted to demonstrate that the kinds of misconstruals with which emotional responses to fictions are typically compared (e.g. the stuffed tiger case) differ significantly from construals involved in response to fiction, for the former involve existential commitment to the object of the construal while the latter do not. It therefore seems that no argument from

analogy made on the basis of such comparisons could be sustained. It further appears that no general principle tying rationality to existential commitment could be maintained without relegating much of our purely hypothetical thinking to the outer darkness of irrationality.

There is hope, I think, for maintaining that we can on occasion feel a coherent and unparadoxical fear for Ripley, and that Radford's pity for Anna Karenina is consistent with many of his more general normative judgements and evaluations. The paradox may lie not in our fearing and pitying fictions, but in the unquestioning acceptance of an alliance between the rational and the unimaginative.

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NOTES

¹ Colin Radford's initial paper, 'How Can We Be Moved by the Fate of Anna Karenina? (I)', appeared under the same title with a reply from Michael Weston (II) in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Vol. 49, Suppl. 6 (1975), pp. 67-93. This was followed by Radford's response to Weston in 'Tears and Fiction', *Philosophy*, Vol. 52 (1977), pp. 208-218. Barrie Parkins' 'On Being Moved by Anna Karenina and Anna Karenina', *Philosophy*, Vol. 52 (1977), pp. 344-47, prompted Radford's 'The Essential Anna', *Philosophy*, Vol. 54 (1979), pp. 390-94. H. O. Mounce's 'Art and Real Life', *Philosophy*, Vol. 55 (1980), pp. 183-192, led to Radford's 'Stuffed Tigers: A Reply to H. O. Mounce', *Philosophy*, Vol. 57 (1982), pp. 529-32. Radford's 'Philosophers and Their Monstrous Thoughts', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 22 (1982), pp. 261-63, is a response to Kendall Walton's 'Fearing Fictions', *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 75 (1978), pp. 5-27, and Peter Lamarque's 'How Can We Fear and Pity Fictions?', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 21 (1981), pp. 291-304. Next, Radford responds to William Charlton's 'Feeling for the Fictitious', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 24 (1984), pp. 206-16, in his own 'Charlton's Feelings about the Fictitious: A Reply', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 25 (1985), pp. 380-83.

Radford's 'Repplies to Three Critics', *Philosophy*, Vol. 64 (1989), 93-7, addresses the work of Don Mannison in his 'On Being Moved by Fiction', *Philosophy*, Vol. 60 (1985), pp. 71-87, as well as the work of two other philosophers. Most recently, Radford has given us 'The Incoherence and Irrationality of Philosophers', *Philosophy* Vol. 65 (1990), pp. 349-54.

² Alex Neill, 'Fiction and the Emotions', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 30 (1993), pp. 1-13.

³ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1378a20-1380a4, W. Rhys Roberts, trans., in *Aristotle II of Great Books of the Western World*, v. 9 (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), pp. 622-25.

⁴ Aristotle, *De Anima* 403a2-403b19, J. A. Smith, trans., in *Aristotle I of Great Books of the Western World* v. 8 (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), pp. 632-633.

⁵ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1126a, Terence Irwin, trans. (IN: Hackett, 1985), pp. 105-6.

⁶ Anthony Kenny, *Action, Emotion, and Will*, excerpted in Cheshire Calhoun and Robert C. Solomon (eds), *What Is an Emotion? Classic Readings in Philosophical Psychology* (NY: Oxford U.P., 1984), p. 284.

⁷ Irving Thalberg, 'Emotion and Thought', in *What Is an Emotion?*, pp. 292 and 304.

⁸ Robert C. Solomon, 'Emotions and Choice', in *What Is an Emotion?*, pp. 305-26.

- ⁹ For example, Rom Harre's 'An Outline of the Social Constructionist Viewpoint', pp. 8-9; Claire Armon-Jones' 'The Thesis of Constructionism', pp. 41-50; and 'Social Functions of the Emotions' pp. 70-1; all of which appear in Rom Harre (ed.), *The Social Construction of Emotions*. Robert C. Roberts offers the most detailed account of such construals in 'What an Emotion Is: A Sketch', *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. XXXVII (1988), 183-209. Ronald de Sousa associates the emotions with the projection of paradigm scenarios, and speaks of constructing or interpreting situations in terms of such scenarios in *The Rationality of Emotion* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990), pp. 181-8.
- ¹⁰ For instance, Errol Bedford discusses a sense in which emotions may be thought justified in 'Emotions and Statements about Them', pp. 24-5; Claire Armon-Jones mentions two types of unwarrantedness in emotion in her 'Social Functions of Emotion', p. 71; and J. Coulter speaks of emotions as reasonable and unreasonable in 'Affect and Social Context', pp. 123-4; all of which appear in *The Social Construction of Emotions*.
- ¹¹ Solomon, 'Emotions and Choice', p. 317.
- ¹² This might not always prove a straightforward matter, given the relativism inherent in certain constructionist theories.
- ¹³ Neill, 'Fiction and the Emotions', pp. 1-2.
- ¹⁴ Kendall Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts* (Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 1990).
- ¹⁵ Roberts, 'What an Emotion Is: A Sketch', pp. 196-201; Cheahire Calhoun, 'Cognitive Emotions?', in *What Is an Emotion?*, pp. 327-42.
- ¹⁶ David Hume, in L. A. Selby-Bigge (ed.), *A Treatise of Human Nature* Book I, Part III, Section XIII (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 147-9.
- ¹⁷ Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* Book I, Part III, Section XIII, p. 148.
- ¹⁸ Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* Book II, Part III, Section III, p. 416. In one respect, Hume treats emotions as unanalysable sensations. However, his claims about indirect emotions suggest that they are, in a sense, intentional, and that they are thought to have cognitive concomitants, as in Book II of the *Treatise*.
- ¹⁹ Roberts, 'What an Emotion Is: A Sketch', pp. 196-201; Calhoun, 'Cognitive Emotions?', pp. 335-42. In Calhoun's case, an emotional response does not require a belief that is held evidentially. Thus, an emotion may be at odds with a belief that is only held intellectually.
- ²⁰ Roberts, 'What an Emotion Is: A Sketch', p. 187; Calhoun, 'Cognitive Emotions?', pp. 339-42.
- ²¹ Roberts, 'What an Emotion Is: A Sketch', p. 196; Calhoun, 'Cognitive Emotions?', p. 338. Again, in Calhoun's case, what is missing is a belief that is held evidentially.
- ²² See the references in the note 1.
- ²³ This kind of an approach is suggested by Bijoy H. Boruah in his *Fiction and Emotion: A Study in Aesthetics and Philosophy of Mind* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 108-17.
- ²⁴ Radford holds that an emotion is rational to the extent that it is consistent with what is believed. Were I to believe *Alien* to be a documentary, my fear for Ripley would be considered rational, even though my belief that I observed actual events was not in itself rational. See Radford's 'Philosophers and Their Monstrous Thoughts', p. 262.
- ²⁵ Radford, 'Stuffed Tigers. A Reply to H. O. Mounce'. Those espousing a cognitivist account of emotion which identified it with belief might deny that one could know oneself safe while fearing for one's safety. They would probably suggest that the child was not quite certain of safety, despite possessing good reasons for believing it. Cheahire Calhoun, in her previously cited work, makes a distinction between holding beliefs intellectually and evidentially. She might suggest that the child only intellectually believed himself safe, but that he did not believe this evidentially. Despite the controversy about the beliefs of the subject in this example, I will for the moment (and for the purpose of furthering the investigation at hand) take Radford's word for the child's knowledge of safety.
- ²⁶ Roberts, 'What an Emotion Is: A Sketch', p. 201.

- ²⁷ This is, for example, suggested by Rom Harre in his discussion of Schachter's work. Harre states that 'some belief in the existence of a suitable intentional object is necessary' for the correct use of emotion words. The preceding quotation is from Harre's 'An Outline of the Social Constructionist Viewpoint', p. 8.
- ²⁸ The last example is suggested by the work of Richard Moran, in 'The Expression of Feeling in Imagination', *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 103 (1994), p. 94.
- ²⁹ Thanks to my colleague Joseph Bessie for his suggestions.
- ³⁰ David Novitz, *Knowledge, Fiction and Imagination* (Philadelphia: Temple U.P., 1987), pp. 75-85.
- ³¹ See, for instance, the assumptions of Nicholas Wolterstorff in his *Works and Worlds of Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).
- ³² I have in mind here Nicholas Wolterstorff's assumptions about extrapolation on the basis of fictional states of affairs in *Works and Worlds of Art* and David Lewis' treatment of the same subject in 'Truth in Fiction', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 15 (1978), pp. 37-46.
- ³³ Peter van Inwagen suggests this as one way of understanding characters in his 'Creatures of Fiction', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 14 (1977), pp. 299-308.
- ³⁴ Peter Lamarque, 'How Can We Fear and Pity Fictions?'

ALIEN OBJECTIONS TO HISTORICAL DEFINITIONS OF ART

Robert Stecker

IN THIS paper I will evaluate two similar objections to historical definitions of art.¹ The objections have been presented by Gregory Currie² and Stephen Davies.³ I will argue that the objections can be answered, but only at some cost to the exclusive correctness of the historical approach. I will briefly suggest at the end that Davies' version of the objection applies to his own favoured approach to defining art—the institutional approach.⁴

For historical definitions, on item *i* is an artwork if and only if *i* stands in a historically significant relation *R* to prior artworks or *i* is first art.⁵ Different historical theories define *R* differently and tell different stories about first art. Currently there are two main candidates for *R*: *being intended for regard in a similar way to* and *being stylistically related to*.⁶ The objections to be considered, however, claim to be general objections to historical definitions, and so do not hang on a particular specification of *R*.

Currie asks us to imagine that we discover a lost Martian civilization in which there are 'artifacts like some of the radically innovative works of our present century'. These objects were thought about and used in much the way we think about and use our art. Hence, 'they ought to count as art'.⁷ However, these objects predate modern art; in fact, we can suppose (which is more than Currie asks) that they predate human art. Hence they do not stand in either the appropriate stylistic or intentional relations to (our) *previous* artworks. Hence the historical approach appears to give the wrong answer about the Martian artifacts, *viz.* that they are not artworks.

There are a number of responses, to secure the right answer, that a proponent of historical definitions can make to this objection (some of which Currie considers). One response is to say that, although the Martian artifacts do not stand in an appropriate relation to previous human artworks (there being none), they do stand in certain relations to future human artifacts similar to (despite their much greater sophistication) the relations in which human first art stands to later art. Given this, historicists can adopt the strategies they used with regard to first art to deal with Martian art. (One proposal is that they become art retro-actively when we discover their similarity to our art. Another proposal is that, because of their similarity with (some) of our art,

we can hypothesize similar intentions for regard and make such similarity sufficient for art status). These responses may not be completely satisfactory, but if they are not they were already problematic for first art.⁸ So no really new problem would be raised by Martian art.

Currie objects that this solution would render the Martians unable to know that their artifacts were art, and this would give them much to complain about. But why should they complain that they cannot apply *our* concept of art to their art? They would have had no knowledge of our concept. In this, they would be no different from ancient Egyptians or Greeks who also would be unable to apply our concept to their art. The Martians will have their own concepts (possibly very similar to ours) that will serve them very well.

Against this response to Currie's complaint, it might be replied that the issue is whether or not the Martians possess not only art, but the same concept of art as we possess. Regarding this, it should first be reiterated that their artifacts can be art without the Martians possessing our concept of art. However, the proponent of a historical definition would claim that if they do possess our concept they must have thought of more recently created artifacts as standing in a relation *R* to prior artifacts.

This suggests a different response than one can make to Currie's problem. One can say that, although the Martian 'modern' art does not stand in an appropriate relation to previous human art, it does stand in such a relation to previous Martian art. After all, there is not just one artistic tradition even among humans, and, hence, there is no reason to think there is a common set of first artworks from which all later art derives. So Martian 'modern' art is art in virtue of its relation to previous Martian art. This response, though reasonable, does raise a new problem, which is precisely the point of Davies' version of the objection.

Davies begins with the point just made: that artworks arise within many different traditions which may well have had independent origins. Davies admits that historical definitions explain how something is an artwork by relating it to a given tradition. (This is what our second response to Currie's problem did.) However, he claims that such definitions will be incomplete until a basis is found for distinguishing art traditions from other historically continuous cultural practices. If there are (or might be) many different art traditions, and if something is an artwork only in relation to some of these (rather than to any or all), then the explanation of how something is an artwork will not be complete without some account of what makes something an art tradition. Does the historical approach have the resources to provide this account? An intention-historicist might appeal to common intentions across traditions, but the supposition of similarity of intention would find its basis in what is already sufficient to do the job, i.e. common art-functions across traditions, or would find no basis at all. What else could be evidence of the relevant intentions other than the fulfilment or expression of the 'regards' by

which those intentions are defined? That is precisely what the fulfilment of art-functions would consist in. So I think an intention-historicist, at least, can solve Davies' problem, but only at a pretty high cost—admitting the existence of an additional sufficient condition for art status—a functional condition.⁹

It is interesting that Davies does not notice that the problem he raises also applies to his own favoured approach to defining art—the institutional approach. On the version of this approach that Davies favours, arthood is a social status conferred by an individual who possesses the necessary authority. This view is also incomplete until it explains why the different art institutions that exist in different traditions are *art* institutions. This it cannot do by pointing out that they are artifact presentation systems or that they contain certain patterns of authority. Non-art institutions contain these things too. Again appeal to art-functions seems to be the most likely answer. An institutionalist might claim that different art traditions serve similar functions at the time of their formation and early afterwards while insisting that institutional structures are likely to come increasingly into prominence as artworks appear that fail to serve traditional functions. Even if an institutionalist can take such a line, it commits them to a functional sufficient condition for being an artwork just as the intention-historicist turned out to be.

Currie concludes his piece by suggesting that our projection of the concept art is 'more dependent on evaluative criteria than historical theories allow'.¹⁰ He may be referring here to the sort of functional considerations I have just been mentioning. If so, we have converged on the same point by somewhat different routes.

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NOTES

¹ Historical definitions are stated and defended in James Carney, 'The Style Theory of Art', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 72 (1991), pp. 272–89; James Carney, 'Defining Art Externally', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 34 (1994), pp. 114–23; Jerrold Levinson, *Music, Art and Metaphysics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell U.P., 1990); and Jerrold Levinson, 'Extending Art Historically', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 51 (1993), pp. 411–23.

² Gregory Currie, 'Aliens Too', *Analysis*, Vol. 53 (1993), pp. 116–18.

³ Stephen Davies, 'Definitions of Art', in E. Craig (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Routledge forthcoming)

⁴ Davies argues for the superiority of institutional definitions in Stephen Davies, *Definitions of Art* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell U.P., 1991).

⁵ My exposition here differs slightly from Currie's. So does my terminology. I speak of first art where he speaks of ur-art. I do not think the differences affect the argument.

⁶ Carney ('The Style Theory of Art', and 'Defining Art Externally') is the exponent of the style-historical approach while Levinson (*Music, Art and Metaphysics* and 'Extending Art Historically') is the exponent of the intentional-historical approach. Noel Carroll has offered a historical narrative approach to identifying art in Noel Carroll, 'Art, Practice,

Narrative', *The Monist*, Vol. 71 (1988), pp. 140–56, Noël Carroll, 'Historical Narratives and the Philosophy of Art', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 51 (1993), pp. 313–26, and Noël Carroll, 'Identifying Art', in Robert Yanal (ed.), *Institutions of Art* (Pennsylvania State UP, 1994); but he denies that these are attempts to define art in the sense of giving a set of necessary, jointly sufficient conditions for an item being an artwork.

⁷ Gregory Currie, 'Aliens Too', p. 116

⁸ Carney, in 'Defining Art Externally', proposes the retroactivity strategy; Levinson proposes the similar intention strategy in

'Extending Art Historically'. That first art poses a problem for historical theories has been evident from their inception.

⁹ I have argued for the importance of the functional in defining art in Robert Stecker, 'The Boundaries of Art', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 30 (1993), pp. 266–72; Robert Stecker, 'Defining Art: the Functionalism/Proceduralism Controversy', *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 30 (1992), pp. 141–52; and Robert Stecker, 'Historical Functionalism or the Four Factor Theory', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 34 (1994), pp. 255–65.

¹⁰ Gregory Currie, 'Aliens Too', p. 118

DEFENDING THOUGHT THEORY FROM A MAKE-BELIEVE THREAT

Edward Gron

WHAT NOËL Carroll calls 'thought theory' in his *Philosophy of Horror* is any theory according to which mere thoughts, in the absence of belief, can cause emotion.¹ Thought theory has been proposed as a solution to the paradox of emotion and fiction by both Carroll and Peter Lamarque.²

The theory can be motivated in the following way. We often emote towards fictional characters. We pity, for example, Willy Loman even though we do not believe that anyone answering to that name really lost their job, or drove off a bridge. Yet, for us to feel pity it seems that we must believe that someone really did do those things. Thought theory solves the paradox since it denies that belief in an object with the appropriate emotion-inducing properties is necessary for emotion. In this essay I shall respond to a problem Kendall Walton raises for thought theory in his *Mimesis as Make-Believe*.³

First, let us get clear about what thought theory is. It holds that the contents of one's thoughts can cause emotion. What is a thought? 'Thought' may be understood as referring to a kind of propositional attitude or to its contents. If we take a thought to be a propositional attitude then it can be distinguished from a belief in the following way. When a person, P, has a belief that some state of affairs, S, is the case, P commits himself to the truth of S. Whereas, when P has the thought that S is the case he does not commit himself to the truth of S; he merely entertains S's being the case. As Carroll writes:

To have a belief is to entertain a proposition assertively; to have a thought is to entertain it nonassertively. Both beliefs and thoughts have propositional content. But with thoughts the content is merely entertained without commitment to its being the case; to have a belief is to be committed to the truth of the proposition.⁴

It is clear that Carroll is in agreement with Lamarque concerning the nature of thoughts, when the latter writes:

Strictly speaking, a thought-content, even if identified under a propositional description, is not assessable as true or false. Certainly the very same propositional content could be incorporated in a judgement or assertion and as such have a truth value. But as an identifying property of a thought the propositional description involves neither judgement nor assertion.⁵

Both philosophers propose that thoughts are both the cause and object of emotion. As Carroll says, 'what we're frightened by are thoughts, or the contents of thoughts'.⁶ And, as Lamarque says, 'the real objects of our fear [or other emotions] in fictional cases are thoughts'.⁷ For example, my thoughts about Willy Loman cause me to feel pity for him. So, strictly speaking, my thoughts about Loman are the proper objects of my pity.

Walton raises what is perhaps the most difficult problem for thought theory. He claims that if thoughts are the objects of our emotions then we are led to the absurd conclusion that we emote towards thoughts.⁸ If this were the case we could, for example, pity, fear, or admire thoughts.

Consider Walton's well-known example. Charles, while watching a movie about green slime, exhibits all the outward characteristics that we associate with someone who is genuinely scared. He grips his seat, his heart races, and so on. Presumably the green slime is a scary fictional character. Walton argues that if thought theory is correct then Charles must 'fear the thought of the slime ...'.⁹ Now, Walton concedes that it is certainly possible for Charles to fear a thought. For example, consider the Charles with a delicate heart condition. He might very well want to avoid any experience, such as the green slime movie, that might excite his heart beyond some tolerable limit. But consider the Charles without a heart condition. Does it make sense to say of him that he could be scared of a thought? To this Walton answers:

Apart from special circumstances . . . [Charles] does not consider the thought dangerous or treat it as such, nor does he experience even an inclination to escape from it. Moreover, his experience simply does not feel like fear of a thought; characterizing it as such flies in the face of its phenomenology. And it is the slime, not a thought, that Charles ... describes himself as afraid of.¹⁰

Now, Walton is certainly correct to say that characterizing thoughts as things that we can fear, pity, admire, etc., is nonsense. It is also beyond doubt that thoughts are not things we think we can run away from. But it does not follow that this is a problem for thought theory. This can be illustrated with a few examples.

It is true that the Egyptians once worshipped Osiris. It is also true that Osiris never existed. So nothing is such that 'Osiris' refers to it. But if that is the case then what are we supposed to make of 'Osiris'? It would appear, following Anscombe, that there are two possible answers.¹¹ We could say that 'Osiris' is a bit of language, or we could say that 'Osiris' is what the bit of language represents. Let us consider the first alternative. If we take it to be the case that 'Osiris' is a bit of language then we are stuck with the absurd conclusion that the Egyptians worshipped a bit of language. But that will not do since the Egyptians did not take themselves to be worshipping a bit of

language, and it is not true that they worshipped a bit of language. The other alternative is to take an idea to be that which 'Osiris' represents. This clearly will not do either since now we have the Egyptians worshipping an idea, and an idea is not what the Egyptians took themselves to be worshipping. To ask the question, 'What did the Egyptians worship?', in this way is to invite a certain kind of fallacy. We are mistakenly looking for some object answering to the name 'Osiris'. That this is a mistake can be shown in the following way.

To say that the Egyptians worshipped Osiris is to say something that is undoubtedly true. But to try to specify the object of the Egyptian's worship is a totally different matter. To attempt to do so is to suppose that there is *something* such that the Egyptians worshipped it. But there is *nothing* such that the Egyptians worshipped it.

Consider another example. It seems that we are on solid ground when we say things such as, 'Charles pities Willy Loman.' This is because we give the sentence a *de dicto* reading. When we give the sentence a *de dicto* reading we mean merely to characterize Charles' thought. And that which characterizes Charles' thought is the *sense* of his thought: *that Willy Loman is pitiable*. It is this sense, or propositional content, which causes Charles to feel pity for Loman. So, when we interpret the sentence *de dicto* we are not describing the object of Charles' pity.

When, however, we give the sentence a *de re* reading we ask, 'What is the object of Charles' pity?' And to this question there can be but one answer: nothing. Since there is no Willy Loman it follows that there is no object such that any property can be predicated of it.

We can agree with Walton when he claims that characterizing thoughts as the objects of our emotion is wrong. But that does not mean that we have to say that there is something wrong with thought theory. Walton mistakenly expects that the answer to the *de re* question, 'What is the object of Charles' pity?', is 'a thought'. But I have shown that the only correct answer to the question, taken *de re*, is: nothing.

Thought theory may be a plausible solution to the paradox, but it does not seem to satisfy our intuition that fictional characters seem to be such that we emotive towards them. But this intuition can be satisfied by noting that sometimes, as in fiction, we refer to that which causes an emotion as the object of that emotion.¹² Now someone sceptical of this claim might still ask, 'But surely it is Willy Loman that Charles pities, isn't it?' My only response is just that he *does* pity Loman, but that Loman is not such that Charles pities him, since there is no Loman. Charles still pities, but it is a kind of free-floating pity.

Here we must distinguish between two kinds of free-floating emotion. There are free-floating emotions such as depression, anxiety, and the like.¹³

These emotions are such that they may not have objects. For example, we may say that someone is depressed without implying that there is some object such that he is depressed about it.

But there is also another kind of free-floating emotion which I am urging, characteristic of emotion towards fiction. A free-floating emotion of this kind is such that it, like Russell's proper names, 'always wishes to have' an object but in the case of fiction usually fails to have one.¹⁴ Charles' pity for Loman, for example, 'wishes' to have a person with Loman's pitiable attributes as its object. This could happen if it turned out that Arthur Miller's play were really biographical instead of fictional. In that case Loman would be such that Charles pities him. But as it turns out, it is only the idea of Loman that fills him with pity. And this pity is such that nothing is the object of it.¹⁵

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NOTES

- ¹ Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror*, (New York: Routledge, 1990), Chapter 2.
- ² See Peter Lamarque, 'How Can We Fear and Pity Fictions?', *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 21 (1981), pp. 291-305; and Carroll, *Philosophy of Horror*, pp. 79-88.
- ³ Kendall Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, (Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 1990).
- ⁴ Carroll, p. 80.
- ⁵ Lamarque, p. 293.
- ⁶ Carroll, p. 82.
- ⁷ Lamarque, p. 294.
- ⁸ Walton, p. 203.
- ⁹ Walton, p. 203.
- ¹⁰ Walton, p. 203.
- ¹¹ G. E. M. Anscombe, 'The Intentionality of Sensation: A Grammatical Feature', in R. J. Butler (ed.), *Analytical Philosophy, Second Series* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1965).
- ¹² This is what Lamarque means when he says, 'We are frightened by thoughts, though we are not frightened of thoughts ...' (his emphasis), p. 294.
- ¹³ One might object to my claim that depression, anxiety, and the like, are emotions. It may be argued that they are best characterized as moods. I think that this is correct. Depression, for example, may best be characterized as a mood. However, following Gilbert Ryle's analysis of emotion in *Concept of Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 104, it is not at all clear that moods are not emotions.
- ¹⁴ Bertrand Russell, *Problems of Philosophy* (New York: Oxford U.P., 1959), p. 54.
- ¹⁵ I am grateful to Bob Yanal, Mike McFerren and Stefan Sencerz for their many helpful suggestions.

GOMBRICH'S STORY OF ART*

Richard Woodfield

THIS JOURNAL did not exist when Gombrich first published *The Story of Art* (1950). I do not know what sort of reception it would have been given then, but it is true to say that it has since attracted a number of critical commonplaces which deserve to be re-examined. It has also never entered into the philosophical arena in the terms which it should have done. This review article is an attempt to redress that situation.

A starting point could be the well-worn idea that Gombrich conceives of art's ambition to be illusion or, better, that the Whole History of Art may be matched against an illusionist ideal. The obvious response to this is that the history of architecture, which features in *The Story of Art*, can hardly have had such an ambition. It might also be recognized that the German *Kunst* includes architecture, but that English typical usage is 'The Art and Architecture of France'. So why is the history of architecture included in *The Story of Art*?—presumably because it stems from a German way of thinking about the subject.

At this point we may recognize that 'Art' is not only a word of the English language, but is also a culturally relative category: the extension of the term 'Art' is not co-extensive with that of so-called translatable terms in other languages. In a *Daily Telegraph* interview, Russell Davies asked Gombrich 'if he considered that the British had a strong visual sense. His answer, characteristically, found a way to be both kindly and surprising: "They must have, because gardening is their great art. It is immensely widely spread, the interest in gardening and flowers. It is the most living art in this country, I think, and has been for a long time"' (22 April 1995). Why does gardening not feature in *The Story of Art*, as it might have done in the eighteenth century?—paradoxically, because it is no longer regarded as an 'Art' by the English-reading community. Not only is the term 'Art' culturally and linguistically relative, but it is historically relative as well.

At this point, the reader might have noticed my deployment of the term 'relative' and, possibly being familiar with Gombrich's aversion to the doctrine of absolute relativism, wonder how *The Story of Art* can handle notions of artistic value. The answer is given in the very first sentence of *The Story of Art*: "There really is no such thing as Art. There are only artists." In a recent talk at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Gombrich declared that this opening sentence

also implies the theoretical position that underlies the whole book. Briefly, I propose to go back to earlier usage, to the time when the word 'Art' signified any skill or mastery as it does when we speak of the

* In September 1995, Phaidon Press of London published the sixteenth edition (revised, expanded and redesigned) of E. H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art*. The book had first been published in 1950. 'Postscript 1965' was added to the 1966 edition, 'Supplement: new discoveries' was added to the 1984 edition. These two editions were incorporated, with a discussion of the postmodern scenario 'An altered mood', as an additional chapter 'A story without end' in the 1989 edition. Through the course of its many editions, Phaidon has improved the quality of plates and production of the volume. This edition adds a very small number of artists, increases the number of plates and returns to the original format of plates proximate to discussion; it is a testimony to the growing quality and sophistication of the art book industry. Its only drawback, now, is its weight, thereby giving support to Goethe's observation that every advance also has a consequential loss, one of the central themes of *The Story of Art* itself.

'Art of War', or the 'Art of Love', or as Whistler did in 'The gentle art of making enemies'. This good old usage was replaced in the Romantic Period by the one that is still in current use according to which the word 'Art' stands for a special faculty of a human mind to be classified with religion and science. It is an interesting shift in meaning but it cannot concern me here. Suffice it to say that when you replace the word 'Art' by the word 'Skill' in the opening sentence, it ceases to look challenging or paradoxical. There can be no skill in the abstract, skill is always for something and the skill with which this book is concerned is mainly that of image making. (22 September 1995, courtesy E. H. Gombrich)

Note that Gombrich says that *The Story of Art* is concerned with 'image making' and not 'the production of the illusionist image'. A major idea behind the book is that at different times of history and in different cultures, image-making has played different roles.

Different periods and cultures offered the visual artist different tasks. Artists working in Western Europe inherited a project which was born in classical antiquity. That project, as others do, has a history which is traceable. As Heinrich Schäfer pointed out in *Von ägyptischer Kunst* (1919), the Greeks introduced the revolution of producing figurative imagery on the eye-witness principle: what could be seen by a stationary spectator from a fixed point. Even so Greek art was not, as Plato said, a mirror to nature; there was more concern with the variety of nature in an Egyptian image than a Greek one. Medieval artists had a different concern, with a form of pictography rather than eye-witness depiction, which nevertheless contained remnants of the ancients' visual discoveries. The urge for 'the artist to "paint what he saw" dawned only during the Renaissance' (p. 561). Other artists, working within other traditions, had different ambitions, and took their image-making activities to different levels of refinement. A major alternative tradition was the Chinese, against which others, such as Assyrian, pre-Columbian or sub-Saharan, hardly match.

In a recent contribution to this journal, I discussed Gombrich's earlier critique of historians who assumed an 'unhistorical aestheticism' based on an assumption of unity of artistic purposes ('Gombrich, Formalism and the Description of Works of Art' *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 34 (1994)). In the 1965 Postscript to *The Story of Art* he reiterated the point. In its conclusion he said that the inclusion of a wide variety of different artifacts from different cultures and periods in museums leads to the belief that 'all this is Art with a capital A though dating from different periods' and commented 'the history of art only begins to make sense when we see why it is not; and why painters and sculptors responded to different situations, institutions and fashions in different ways' (p. 618).

So what Gombrich is doing is to tell us about *our* artistic tradition and how *we* emerged from it. An interesting question is: how is it ours?

The key to *The Story of Art* is the role that tradition has had to play within the historical development of our culture. To define a culture in terms of its most recent products would be to tear the centre out of its existence. In the same way that a language offers a resource for endless creativity and carries 'lumps' of practice bedded into it, so do the other arts. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is a linguistic resource within the resource of language itself and Poussin's paintings are a resource within the greater resource of visual imagery.

As writers of the eighteenth century developed complex narrative skills which led to the triumphs of the French novel in the nineteenth century (see V. Milne, *The Eighteenth-Century French Novel. Techniques of Illusion*, Manchester, 1965), visual artists of the Italian renaissance developed technical skills which were refined by artists of later generations.

But linguistic complexity does not, of itself, produce a fine novel or poem and visual technical skills do not, of themselves, generate works of art. After all, one point linear perspective simply offers a schema to handle size relationships in space and an understanding of the workings of occlusion. Raphael did not simply create *The School of Athens* from his knowledge of perspective and Michaelangelo's *Last Judgement* displays more than a good working knowledge of anatomy, it is the visual 'poetry' which makes them both works of art.

The nineteenth century witnessed the end of an engagement with a living tradition of artistic achievement dating back to the Italian renaissance. A search for new standards emerged. Contrary

to popular belief Gombrich is not hostile to twentieth-century art *per se*, though he is definitely unsympathetic to much of it. His concern is more with the doctrines which have led it to develop in the ways in which it has, and particularly the ways in which art has become captured by ideologists. A central question today is not whether a work of art is good but whether it is on the side of progress, even in a period which claims to have disposed of master narratives.

Few people, particularly ideological commentators, seem to have given much serious thought to the 1965 Postscript to *The Story of Art* (now pp 612–18). Gombrich pointed to the significance of the ideas that one should be of one's time, that we are all riding on the tide of historical progress and that we should deny the value and continued relevance of what has been achieved in the past. Taken to their logical conclusion they result in barbarism, an example being Ceaucescu's forced transformation of Rumania by eviction and bulldozer. What many of modernism's supporters forget is that the past continues to have a valued present. Indeed a number of modernist practitioners actively conducted raids into past art to provide motifs for their own, *Der Blaue Reiter* and Picasso offer cases in point. Its supporters, however, have treated the visual arts as a polarizing issue to contrast the enlightened with the benighted: the former *must* reject the past and the latter's enthusiasm for Rembrandt, Beethoven and Dostoevsky marks them as unregenerately behind the times. It does not seem to strike anyone that this is an unintelligent attitude to take. And because Gombrich maintains that one cannot have achievement without the refinement and development of skills, i.e. tradition, he is branded a conservative.

At this point it would be useful to extend his institutional analysis of artistic practice to the teaching of art history. If art history departments once used to serve the interests of curators and connoisseurs, they have now become a target for political activists. The great artistic achievements of the past have been labelled High Art and dismissed as having traditionally served the interests of the dominant classes. Judgements of value are now simply seen as reflecting ideological interest. Our culture, as a source of value, has been replaced by a value free system of cultures to be studied as a sociologist would study any other form of consumer behaviour.

In an essay 'Art History and the Social Sciences' (reprinted in *Ideals and Idols*, Oxford, 1979) Gombrich made the point that 'the sociologist can always tell us which are the top ten; he cannot commit himself to picking a first eleven. The top ten, as we know, are based on real or pretended statistics of sale; the choice of a first eleven is a matter of past performance—and of faith' (p. 155). Although facts may assist in making value judgements, the value judgements themselves remain unprovable. One cannot prove that Raphael was a better artist than Botticelli, even on Gombrich's account of technical development because, as he often says, an achievement in one direction is often accomplished with a loss in another. Nevertheless, they both deserve a place in a first eleven. If one had no faith in one's own first eleven, one would be lost.

Great art offers a better filter through which I might understand myself and others (the central tenet of *Bildung*) than anything else. Engels actually addressed this problem in a letter to Margaret Harkness when he described Balzac's *Comédie Humaine* as more revealing about the state of French society than any tendentious literature, despite the fact that he was a legitimist (Maynard Solomon, *Marxism and Art*, Brighton, 1979, pp. 67–9). And Walter Benjamin, another product of *Bildung*, rated quality of artistic performance more highly than political correctness ('The Author as Producer', in *Understanding Brecht*, London, 1977). Ideologues who teach 'minority cultures' are usually those who have been trained in the major leagues.

Our own European cultures (in the plural) would not have their distinctive physiognomies without their masterpieces. The qualitative characteristics of a culture are not measurable, but that is not to say that they are not there. Interests, enjoyments and desires are better satisfied in some places rather than others. British patrons of the eighteenth century recognized this when they imported their art, painters and composers from France and Italy and exported their sons on the Grand Tour. They knew what they wanted their world to be and acted on it, to the extent of employing architects and landscape gardeners to transform their living environments. Valued features of an environment may be discoverably there.

I once had a self-professed working class student who took some very boring photographs of her own immediate locale. When she was challenged by the staff to make more interesting pictures, she replied that she was not interested in producing picturesque photographs for her middle class tutors because her environment *was* boring. She obviously shared her tutors' view of her own environment; so much for the relativity of values.

Although one may not be able to justify a value system, at least within that system one may indicate the things which give it its value. This does not result in a canonical first eleven, but at least some debate over what might be in it. There is no debate over the point of its being there.

As Gombrich himself has often remarked, the book was born out of a particular intellectual milieu: the pursuit of *Bildung*, which was the secular religion of German speakers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In his own Viennese home, it was believed that it was important to have a commitment to nature and art, which were 'needs of the mind' (see 'Nature and Art as Needs of the Mind', in *Tributes*, Oxford, 1984). Leaving nature to one side, Art consisted of whatever was great and good in the history of culture, the classics of music, literature and the visual arts. This included world art to the extent that Gombrich's nursery stories included tales from the *Mahabharata*. He was brought up on a diet of good books, from Homer through Shakespeare and Goethe to Dostoevsky and Ibsen, and music in the classical German tradition. He was also encouraged to explore the city's museums, which he did with great enthusiasm. The Austrian Museum of Arts and Crafts played a similar role to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and contained a vast range of artifacts from across the world including 'one of the richest collections of oriental rugs anywhere in the world' (E. H. Gombrich, *The Sense of Order*, Oxford, 1979, p. 180). Its wide range of paintings and drawings contained a significant volume of work from the Middle Ages and the Northern European schools, echoing the interests of its founder Rudolph Eitelberger von Edelberg. It is not surprising, to me at least, that *Bildung* should have bred the great anthropologists and philologists of the nineteenth century. Neither does it surprise me that Gombrich, with his friend Kurz, should have studied Chinese when leaving university or that his son is now Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford University.

Freud and Marx, as well, were brought up in the tradition of *Bildung*. For Freud, psychoanalysis had nothing to say about what made Art with a capital 'A' and had little relevance to the practice of Art (see E. H. Gombrich, 'Freud's Aesthetics', in Richard Woodfield (ed.), *Reflections on the History of Art*, Oxford, 1987). And for Marx, 'the difficulty .. (of) Greek art and epos ... lies in understanding why they still constitute for us a source of aesthetic enjoyment and in certain respects still prevail as the standard and model beyond attainment' (Introduction to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, quoted in Solomon, p. 62). As Gombrich himself said, 'it is wholly understandable that it has ... become usual to explain and if possible to excuse Freud's rejection of modern art by pointing to the prejudices of his generation and of his milieu.' But as he went on to say, 'it is always somewhat risky to dispose of the views of a great man which we find uncomfortable ... We may be quite sure that he had theoretical reasons for his attitude' ('Verbal Wit as a Paradigm of Art', in *Tributes*, p. 103).

Gombrich's own discomfort with modern art was born out of its advocates' claims and what he sees as its tendencies to regression. I must confess that I share his preference for Beethoven over the latest experiments in atonalism or post-modern pastiche, and give me Rembrandt, Degas and the best Persian carpets any day. There is no need to be exclusive, however. But there is an important difference between knowing one's Rembrandt and knowing *about* Rembrandt: therein lies the difference between *Bildung* and the academy.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Passing Strange and Wonderful. Aesthetics, Nature, and Culture By YI-FU TUAN. Kodansha International 1995. x + 288pp. £10.99

PART I of this remarkable, readable, enjoyably instructive book contains a sympathetic and convincing account of the aesthetic development of children. Part II, 'Sensory Delights', is a richly illustrated description of the contribution of each of the senses to aesthetic experience. A section on touch is followed by a rapid history of 'food and manners' in Europe and China. The aesthetic role of the sense of smell is profusely documented, to rectify our chronic under-appreciation. Yi-Fu Tuan next turns to sounds — sounds in nature, 'human cacophony', sounds of the city, music, music as communal celebration, 'pure music and cognition'. Then comes discussion of the primacy of sight. Sight yields a world 'both sensual and intellectual' (p. 96). Vivid, enhanced vision enhances life itself (p. 100). Again, Tuan illustrates his theme with a dazzling range of diversified instances: the mediaeval cathedral as 'a vast jewelbox, radiant with the light that poured through its rose windows', the 'lumd' light of flame and smoke in the Industrial Revolution, and a poignant account of concentration-camp prisoners rushing out of doors to see a 'wonderful sunset' (pp. 105, 108). There now follows a section on 'The Beauty of Order: Cosmos and Microcosm' — 'The heavens display the exemplary motion of the stars. On earth, humans must create their own order': Tuan considers the plans of cities, their 'sacred space' and their cosmic references (as the sun casts its rays over the human world, so avenues can radiate from a central point in a city (pp. 108–13)).

Tuan's meditation plays first over the order of the familiar, the domestic, then over the aesthetic potentialities of what lies beyond the humanized — the domain of the sublime —

which he rightly sees as much more than a historically transient type of experience (p. 114). Tuan is sensitive to the elusiveness of the sublime to anything like precise description. He finds a wealth of relevant material on this aspect of the aesthetic in accounts of polar exploration — the explorers' 'yearning for sublime experience' (p. 115).

Part III focuses on the 'cultural-aesthetic spectrum', and illustrates it from Australian-Aboriginal, Chinese, mediaeval European and modern American cultures. Although diversity is again prominent, Tuan makes it clear that he is no historical or cultural relativist. All these cultures 'demonstrate the power of the imagination to transcend group values held at a certain time by incorporating values from another group and thereby grow': 'as individuals, we can surpass group norms' (pp. 121f). In each case, Tuan demonstrates movingly how experience of concrete objects — tree-stumps, animal tracks, marshes, fishermen and ploughmen, the 'shape of a leaf or a tendril' — has been fused with beliefs about the cosmos, ancestors, heroes, or with Taoist-Buddhist mysticism, or belief in the all-creating and -ordering Christian Deity, in complex aesthetic-religious-cultural wholes. Such belief in 'the unity of beauty, truth and goodness', however, Tuan sees as belonging, largely, to the past: we may look back upon it 'with nostalgia and envy' (p. 142).

Chapter 7 turns to the aesthetic appreciation of environment in America: to Jefferson on the view at the Blue Ridge water gap, expressing the 'lure of distance', awareness of geological time-scale, of 'tumult and serenity'. (Tuan well understands the aesthetic importance of paradoxical modes of experience.) Landscape has often been seen as morally uplifting — though Tuan inserts a sceptical note, commenting that 'Wilderness does not always console or inspire

virtue . . . ' (p. 150). In the spirit of the twentieth-century West — and in familiar ways problematic! — is landscape as appreciated in greatly accelerated motion on the freeway or from the air (p. 156).

In Chapter 8, Tuan further complicates his account of the aesthetic, with the concept of 'multisensory experience'. 'fire in the hearth . . . is color and movement, crackling sound, fragrance and warmth' (p. 167). Multisensory experience pervades our appreciation of the countryside. A concept of high importance to Tuan is symbolic space ('geography elevated and transfigured' (p. 175)); he describes its role in the Sioux, Chinese, Australian-Aboriginal and American traditions.

Chapter 9 considers symbolic space as integrated into the state — 'an aesthetic-moral construction on a grand scale' (p. 182). Tuan adds Renaissance Venice to his case-studies; its rituals were 'enacted myth' — presenting vividly 'an ideal of the good' (p. 195). He jumps to the France of Louis XIV and again to America, asking, finally, what is the aesthetic character of a modern democratic state?

In Chapter 10 ('Good and Beautiful') he raises the question how far the aesthetic and the moral can work together without undue human cost, injustice or social oppression. Their compatibility has indeed often been assumed, and these values inextricably intertwined, in both East and West. Art, to Tuan, 'establishes mutuality', yields 'a shared world', teaches us to 'attend to realities beyond the self', to value the ephemeral and to deplore human destructiveness. The venture of human culture is 'to be judged ultimately by its moral beauty' (pp. 221, 223, 240).

Tuan offers a splendid corrective to an over-narrow aesthetic sensibility. The reader has to be grateful for the immense amount of historically concrete instances, aesthetic data, he assembles here. The book has a frankly didactic, almost evangelical quality. ('The more attuned we are to the beauties of the world, the more we come to life and take joy in it' (p. 1).) Although Tuan does have a section on 'Shadows: Human Frailty and Evil', on 'deadening formalism', distortingly single-minded pursuit of aesthetic goals, and perverse misuse of the aesthetic impact of ritual and

ceremony as in Nazi Germany, it is a brief section, and his characteristic tone is affirmative and aspirational.

Tuan describes his 'primary purpose' as 'to redirect attention to the wonders of the human senses, mind and cultural-aesthetic achievement' (p. 226), a purpose he certainly attains. The style of his book is appreciative and celebratory: it chronicles rather than argues. It is not a monograph in aesthetic theory, nor a history of aesthetic theories. Tuan assumes the truth of contextual positions in aesthetics which monographs are obliged to argue for and defend. But what he has written is at every point relevant to the theorist, also to the aesthetic appreciator of art and nature, and to anyone with interest in the aesthetic dimension of cultural artefacts — in his own or a range of other cultures, past or present.

A good many epistemological questions arise naturally from his material, though they are not examined here in detail. They involve, for instance, the fundamental concepts of the moral and the aesthetic which give us, in their intertwining, that important concept of 'moral beauty'. Tuan does not here enter the philosophical debates over subjectivisms and objectivisms in aesthetics, nor over historical and cultural relativisms — though it is not hard to infer his personal positions on most of these. Again, in a variety of contexts, he happily uses such a religious concept as the 'sacred' or 'holy' (pp. 111, 172f, 219, for example). There is, for him (as indeed for this reviewer), a very fluid boundary between aesthetic and religious, but it is not his style to agonize over just which religious notions, attitudes, emotions, are in consistency available to believers and unbelievers in specific religious doctrines — including ourselves today. I regret a little that Tuan does not bring Schiller (or Kant) into his study. His main concerns, the relations between sensory, moral, social and religious, were memorably discussed in Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*. But that is an ungrateful comment, for there is so much in the book that (at least to me) is new and fresh and wonder-evoking — which is of course how Tuan wants us to see his world.

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Images of Excellence. Plato's Critique of the Arts.

By CHRISTOPHER JANAWAY. Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1995. pp. 226 £30.00

THIS is a lucid and thoughtful survey, which is effective both as an introduction to the topic and as a contribution to scholarly debate. Plato's dismissive treatment of the arts (especially in *Republic* 10) has sometimes been regarded as too perverse to count as a serious contribution to aesthetic theory. However, Janaway maintains that Plato's claims are better argued than is often supposed, and that they raise substantial issues to which we have no easy answers; one such question is whether there is any determinate category of 'aesthetic' theory. In taking this approach, Janaway is close to a number of recent British and American scholars, such as Ferrari, Halliwell, and Nehamas. Where his book adds is by drawing out the argumentation that, explicitly or implicitly, underlies Plato's claims, and by correlating Plato's position with modern aesthetic theory from Kant onwards. Both these types of contribution could have been taken further than they are; and the book does not include close and searching examination of the content and language of key passages. But, at its length and level, Janaway's book seems to me largely successful in its objectives.

The book is organized around a series of topics, which are correlated with dialogues at different periods of Plato's writing-career. Two chapters focus on the idea of *techné* ('skill', 'art', or 'expertise'), one on *to kalon* ('the beautiful' or 'fine'), three on the *Republic* (on the foundation of character and on *mimesis*), and one on a range of topics in post-*Republic* dialogues. One question not addressed (which has figured prominently in recent Platonic scholarship) is whether Plato should be seen as having a unified or developing philosophical position, or as exploring, dialectically, different positions in different works. A related question which is not confronted (one relevant to Plato's own role as a creative artist), is how far our interpretation should reflect the fact that Plato does not speak in his own voice but through a series of dialectical encounters. In effect, Janaway treats Plato's dialogues as (argued) essays; he also presents him as having a single, though

not systematically expounded, set of concerns and positions.

Indeed, the book brings out how one question runs through much of Plato's theorizing on this subject. This is that of how far any form of artistic activity, especially the composition of epic and tragic poetry, measures up to Plato's criteria for knowledge (especially for ethical knowledge). Plato is not denying, Janaway believes, that a poet or rhapsode (poetic reciter), like an orator, has a kind of skill, that of producing pleasure in an audience by the effective use of language, above all by 'representation' (*mimesis*). What Plato denies is that this constitutes skill (*techné*) or knowledge (*epistémē*) in any strong or substantive sense, namely that of knowledge of objective (and ethically significant) truth and the ability to communicate this to others. In doing so, as Janaway might have stressed more than he does, Plato is disputing the traditional Greek role of poetry (especially epic and tragedy) as a source of ethical wisdom and education. Janaway does stress that, although Plato's arguments indicate a recognition of concepts which have figured centrally in subsequent aesthetic theory, such as fictionality and aesthetic distance, he denies that these concepts have any autonomous status or value. A crucial part of the challenge that Plato makes to modern theory is to prove that the concept of the aesthetic has a distinct status and significance.

In pursuing this line of thought, Janaway makes several fresh observations, particularly about the earlier dialogues. He argues that, in the *Ion*, Plato's key point is not that the rhapsode has no skill whatever, but that he lacks *techné* in the sense of the ability to understand and explain the ethical content of Homeric poetry. Janaway also underlines the significance in the *Gorgias* of Plato's coupling of poetry (especially theatrical poetry) with rhetoric as a 'non-rational practice', which is effective in producing pleasure but which does not meet Plato's criteria for real expertise. Discussing the beautiful (*to kalon*), Janaway emphasizes that, in the *Hippias Minor*, *Symposium*, and *Philebus*, Plato, unlike Kant, does not identify any distinctively aesthetic sense of 'beautiful'. But at the heart of the book is the examination of the two discussions of poetry in the *Republic*. Jana-

way stresses (a point sometimes overlooked in accounts of Plato's philosophy of art) that the overall aim of the *Republic*, the analysis of a perfectly just psyche and community, provides the essential context for making sense of the treatment of art as *mimesis*. In Books 2-3, as in the later *Laws*, the notoriously ruthless censorship of the arts is not part of a blueprint for any and every society. It expresses the aim of defining the role of the arts in the formation of ethically good character in an ideal society, notably through the assimilation of dispositional attitudes by the artistic 'imitation' (*mimesis*) of these. Janaway notes, but could develop, the analogy with the role of music and other arts in medieval and Renaissance Christian communities (130). In Book 10, Plato's primary aim is to show, through the analysis of the concept of artistic representation (*mimesis*), that poetry, including the culturally prestigious epic and tragedy, is necessarily (because of its metaphysical and psychological status) incapable of serving as a medium for the transmission of objective ethical knowledge. While not ignoring some philosophically questionable features in the argumentation of Book 10, Janaway maintains convincingly that Plato's ethical concerns clarify some apparent inconsistencies (for instance, about the relationship between narrative and representation in Book 3, and about whether Books 3 and 10 share the view that 'imitative' poetry must be banished from the ideal state (*Republic* 595a)). His two chapters on *mimesis* also constitute a convincing demonstration of his thesis that, although Plato's claims about art derive from a highly specific philosophical standpoint, the questions raised cannot easily be answered or set aside, even in our altered artistic and cultural context.

In his final chapter, Janaway takes up in a connected way an issue that figures intermittently throughout the book, whether we can answer the questions that Plato raises. He considers a range of possible answers, but focuses on what he calls the 'aesthetic' and 'cognitive/ethical' answers. The aesthetic answer, indebted to Kant, is that human beings are naturally adapted to take a 'disinterested pleasure' in artistic representation; and that the standards appropriate for judging

such disinterested pleasures are distinct from those relevant to ethical or other kinds of epistemic judgement. The ethical/cognitive answer is that the combination of the particularity and the fictionality of art generates a kind of ethical understanding (for instance, *what it feels like* to experience tragic situations) which cannot be produced in any other way. I think that the argument of this interesting chapter could have been pursued further than it is, with fuller exploration of the ethical/cognitive answer (the only one that engages closely with Plato's position). For instance, I would like to see whether a good argument can be constructed for one of the main points that Plato denies: that there is a necessary connection between the pleasurable of an artistic work and the degree to which it yields ethical insight. This argument could include a thought that Plato might have reason to take seriously that art can serve as a vehicle for new or non-standard beliefs or attitudes which are designed to contribute to a continuing ethical dialectic. A further question which could legitimately be put to Plato is whether or not the ethical standpoint, whose relevance to art he presupposes, has the self-evident priority that he assumes.

There are some other ways in which Janaway's project could have been pursued further. He understates the significance of the *Timaeus* for his topic, overlooking some suggestive points in the framing of the Atlantis story, including the ideas of knowledge-based story telling (*Timaeus* 19b-20b) and of language as a *mimesis* of reality (*Critias* 107b-e). The chapter on the post-*Republic* dialogues (7) is somewhat perfunctory in its treatment of the question whether or not there are any substantive changes from the thought of the *Republic*. Also, the analysis of the texts which are examined fully (including the *Republic*) does not have quite the penetration and tenacity of Ferraro's (outstanding) chapter in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. 1. In spite of these qualifications, I found very little in the main thrust or the detailed argument of Janaway's book which did not strike me as convincing. I think that it makes a real contribution both as a survey and a suggestive piece of scholarship, and my main reservation is that the work could

have pursued its chosen line of thought further than it does.

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Literature against Philosophy, Plato to Derrida. A Defence of Poetry By MARK EDMUNDSON.

Cambridge U.P. 1995. xii + 243 pp £35.00.

THIS BOOK does not quite deliver what its title promises. 'Plato to Derrida' suggests a survey and history of philosophical scepticism about literature, perhaps taking into account Augustine and Nietzsche, the Positivists and the early Utilitarians, but after a brief sketch of Plato's position and a glance at Coleridge, Edmundson moves immediately to the second half of the twentieth century. 'Literature against philosophy' is also misleading. Apart from the two philosophers in the title, Foucault is considered, but the primary focus of the book is North American literary theory, and philosophy is only really of interest insofar as it touches upon or illuminates this. Finally, anybody turning to this defence of poetry in order to learn about poetry will be disappointed. This is partly because Edmundson uses 'poetry' as a synecdoche to stand for literature as a whole, but mainly because there is remarkably little about literature in this book which sets out to defend it.

Edmundson's polemical target is a particular conception of literary theory which sees theory as a disdainful tribunal before which authors are interrogated. This conception of theory expects them to be, and with relentless regularity they turn out to be, naïve and ideologically compromised. The charges of course will vary with the kind of theory, but a comprehensive list would certainly include being right-wing, Eurocentric, racist, phallogocentric, logocentric, Oedipal, and the dupe and servant of established power structures. Although Edmundson is at pains to emphasize that he is not against literary theory *per se*, he is inclined to think that this conception of criticism is unhealthy, and that there may be something to be said for treating authors with a more generous measure of understanding and sympathy.

Consequently, the main chapters of Edmundson's book probe the theoretical

limitations of six influential critics or critical schools which have, in his opinion, fed this harmful view of theory. They are de Man, Derrida, Neo-Marxism, New Historicism, Foucault and Bloom.

Edmundson sees Derrida not as the philosopher who has overcome the tradition of western metaphysics, but as the most recent philosopher in that tradition to take flight from the pleasures of the senses and seek refuge ('reality') in labyrinthine abstractions. In succeeding chapters he argues that historical scholars are frequently naïve from the literary point of view. Greenblatt, for example, is all too ready to assume that audiences will identify with Prince Hal rather than Shakespeare, and, contra Levinson, no serious doubt is thrown on Wordsworth's achievement in 'Tintern Abbey' by failures in strict historical reportage. He goes on to propose that burying poems under piles of 'contextualising' footnotes is simply one strategy for neutralizing the disturbing impact of genius.

His later chapters are equally sane. Only someone in the grip of paranoia, he argues, could imagine that Foucault's discussions of power characterize *all* areas of modern life; and, in place of the Oedipal struggles Bloom thinks he discerns in poets' relations with their influences, Edmundson suggests a 'country-myth': the poet does not so much want to overcome the influence of his forebears as make what is best in their work become responsive to his own historical epoch. There are several incidental pleasures on the way: I particularly enjoyed his juxtaposition of Paglia and Derrida, and his suggestion as to why a later version of Coleridge's 'Dejection' is addressed to 'Edmund'. The book ends with some thoughtful points about why Wordsworth's line, 'But there's a Tree, of many, one' may have made Blake weep.

At several points in the book, Edmundson worries that his style may be inappropriately academic for a work which expresses some scepticism about the effect of universities on criticism. In fact, the lively and invigorating style manages to avoid both cold pomp and prolix teasing — the twin stylistic poles of contemporary theory. He clearly enjoys provoking his audience with words like 'taste' and

'poise', and he shows some talent for the spirited turn of phrase: 'Paglia's distinction,' he writes, 'lies in being an articulate proponent for the side of the argument that's generally left undefended: the throngs dancing around the golden calf, or crowding into the holy brothels of Corinth, don't publish much criticism' (p. 98). And of a painting by Pollock he remarks. '[It's] as though someone had detonated a Dutch Master a few rooms down, sending its elements back into fruitful chaos' (p. 83)

However, if the book is lively in detail it is rather diffuse and academic in overall effect. Edmundson seems anxious not to offend, and this deprives him of the forcefulness and independence necessary to haul himself clear of the theoretical abuses he tries to expose. A defence of poetry ought to be based around poetry — perhaps taking a number of poems which have been widely discussed by theoreticians, and then showing what their theories prevent them from seeing — but here the agenda is entirely set by theory and, as is usual in such cases, poetry is virtually squeezed out. It is also difficult to place much confidence in the independence of a mind which can invent the most abject solution to the gendered pronoun problem yet devised: he uses 'she' when something he approves of is being described ('A good critic is always skeptical about literature: she must be ... (p. 217)) and 'he' when it is something unpleasant ('There's a particular kind of mind that assumes that the most unpalatable truth must be the essential truth ... So he prepares himself by thinking the worst ... (p. 214)).

More seriously, many of Edmundson's polemical points are too brief and too muted, and a good deal of the energy which should have gone into being effective and incisive is channelled into digressions. The effect is similar to the results of amateur film making: hours seem to be spent on unimportant conversations while nodal points of the plot — births, battles, betrayals — are over in seconds. Thus two important criticisms of Foucault (that a large number of his facts are straightforwardly wrong and that his account of the structures circumscribing intellectual life is too pat) remain undeveloped, while six pages are devoted to a summary of the life and works of

Lionel Trilling in the Prologue, eight pages to an account of Barthes on wrestling in chapter two, six pages to a discussion of the working conditions of airline reservation agents in chapter four, and so on. These kinds of digression may enliven a seminar, but they deaden the impact of whatever polemical force the book has.

Edmundson's most confusing nest of indirections occurs at the beginning of chapter one. This is on de Man, and its main purpose is to show that de Man models the relationship of author and critic on the relationship of patient and analyst, thereby illegitimately empowering the critic. Edmundson begins not with de Man but with Wordsworth's 'Immortality Ode'. He then moves to Coleridge's criticisms of the Ode, and then to Freud's *The Future of an Illusion*. Eventually, twelve pages into the chapter, we reach de Man. The excuse for this is that de Man disagrees with Coleridge about allegory, while Edmundson wants to show that de Man and Coleridge are in profound agreement about theory as a whole. But this hardly justifies such a lengthy introduction. It is not a dramatic paradox to discover that de Man agrees with Coleridge about one thing but disagrees with him about something else, and the nature of the similarities Edmundson uncovers between the two thinkers are so abstract and vaguely characterized that they would serve to link de Man with a score of other critics: 'Like Coleridge [de Man] makes rhetorical terms central to his proceedings; his prevailing critical mode is technical. Like Coleridge, he focuses on epistemological issues, on the truth or falsity of certain modes of reading Like Coleridge, de Man is a formalist. The content of the symbol matters less to Coleridge than the fact that it makes contact with the eternal' (p. 48). It is additionally painful that the section on the 'Immortality Ode', the book's only substantial discussion of poetry, proves to be an irrelevance.

Edmundson's heart is in the right place, and he has written a sane, engaging and readable book. It is a professional contribution to an on-going debate, and that, after all, is what publishers and research committees like. However, its form and tone mean that ultimately it lacks the courage and crispness of outline that

characterize important and original work. His style indicates a lively-minded man who has felt the itch for liberation, but at the moment his manner of writing works against him. When it is coupled, as here, with somebody else's agenda and unrestrained digressive habits, it can make him seem rather lightweight and eager to please. When it is coupled with deep-rooted independence of judgement, and a willingness ruthlessly to prune his work of all extraneous and ephemeral matter, we shall have something outstandingly good. Next time, I hope he writes about Coleridge, Blake and Wordsworth directly, and gives free rein to the undoubted flair for close reading which this book all too intermittently shows.

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Whom Gods Destroy: Elements of Greek and Tragic Madness. By RUTH PADEL. Princeton U.P. 1995. pp. 276 £19.95.

WHOM GODS DESTROY they first make mad: *quem deus vult perdere, dementat prius*. The origins of the Latin expression to which the title of Ruth Padel's new book alludes are uncertain, but the thought it expresses is familiar from Greek tragedy. In fact, one of the book's themes is the centrality of this madness to tragedy: tragedy enacts 'the damage a damaged mind can do' (p. 147). In archaic Greek texts, the word *ate* refers to the cycle in which aberration in the mind manifests itself in an aberrant act and its destructive consequences. In tragedy, which is entirely concerned with this sequence, *ate* is 'thinned down' to mean disaster or death. 'you cannot have one word for the link between a harmed mind and harm in the world in a genre that exists to explore that very link' (p. 188). In tragedy, therefore, madness fills the gap created by the contraction of *ate*.

There is, as Padel points out, a parallel between this view of tragedy and Aristotle's notion of tragic *hamartia*, which recent scholarship has recognized as embracing both 'intellectual' errors and their moral implications. But Aristotle's analysis of tragedy, unlike Greek tragedy itself, neglects the crucial role of the divine. In this respect Aristotle provides one illustration of the perennial tendency of in-

terpreters to assimilate what is awkward and uncongenial in the texts they study to their own preferred frames of reference. A recurrent theme of Padel's book (addressed perhaps with eloquence, more than a precise analysis of the philosophical issues it raises) is the need for interpreters to adopt the anthropologist's commitment to understanding a culture in its own terms. Thus, for example, modern attempts to collapse the explanatory categories distinctive to Greek tragedy into the supposed universals of psychoanalysis are subjected to a withering appraisal.

A proper appreciation of the argument which Padel advances in the present book depends on its being read together with her earlier work, *In and Out of the Mind: Greek Images of the Tragic Self* (Princeton, 1992). There she explores Greek concepts of the self and the phenomena of consciousness from linked biological and 'daemonological' perspectives. Biological, because (as Padel shows) for fifth-century Greeks, consciousness resides in our 'innards' — in heart, liver and lungs, and the flux of breath and inner fluids: 'emotional and intellectual events . . . are physical movement' (p. 44). So thought and feeling arise (just as our bodily states do) in the interaction between what is in us and what is outside: 'our innards are porous to suffering and interference' (p. 59). Here biology connects to daemonology, for what is outside us includes superhuman but nevertheless personal powers: 'In Athenian homes and cities, daemons were a force as live and considerable as electricity for us' (p. 114). Thought and emotion are therefore also an interaction with the daemonic outside us. 'Gods may send emotion, be in it, be it. Emotion is their weapon, habitation, manifestation, medium. Through it they control human feelings, demonstrate their power, and enjoy their own honour' (p. 128).

A persistent red-herring in the earlier book's pursuit of this topic was metaphor. The opening chapter identified metaphor as a main theme, and claimed that 'fifth-century Greeks did not distinguish literal from metaphorical, or not in the way that we do' (p. 9). The unqualified claim that fifth-century Greeks did not distinguish literal from metaphorical would be manifestly false. If they did not, they

would have had no use for expressions like 'as if'. Moreover, metaphor is not evenly distributed through fifth-century literature, but is denser and more adventurous in some genres (including tragedy) than others, differentiated use implies a power of discrimination. Hence (presumably) the qualifying clause — which unfortunately robs the assertion of virtually all its content. Padel had in fact failed to disentangle various different polarities. literal *vs* metaphorical, physical *vs* non-physical, concrete *vs* abstract, real *vs* unreal, were all at different points run together. If the Greeks described as physical, or as real, things which we regard as non-physical (such as feelings), or as unreal (such as the gods which cause them), this was not because they failed to distinguish literal from metaphorical, but because they had a different understanding of what thought and feeling actually are.

A more persuasive formulation of the difference between Greek and modern ways of speaking of the mind could be found in Padel's observation that 'we tolerate extraordinary dissociations between what we think is inside us and what we imply is inside us when we speak of our feelings' (p. 35). We have inherited Greek vocabulary and imagery, but not the system of beliefs which informed them; like fossils, Greek imagery is 'calcified in our newer tongues' (p. 85). The fact that so much of the intellectual furniture we take for granted has descended to us from the Greeks themselves makes the commitment to understanding a culture in its own terms particularly important in the case of our reading of the Greeks, and particularly difficult to fulfil. Greek expressions look familiar; but this superficial familiarity distracts us from the complex transformations that they have undergone in the long history of their descent, and conceals from us their profoundly alien character as the Greeks used them. Padel's work presented a convincing demonstration that the Greeks were indeed 'astonishingly alien' (p. 10).

The findings of the earlier book provide the starting-point for the new one: 'This is tragedy's version of normal consciousness disturbed by passion: a background normality very different from our own. It would be odd if tragedy's ideas of madness were not very dif-

ferent too' (p. 13). The rest of the book explores in detail the ramifications of various tragic images of madness — darkness, wandering, damage — and shows, too, how these images have been transformed in the course of their descent to us (Padel notes that Plato's *Phaedrus* already offers significantly new ways of thinking about madness).

Madness as damage brings us back to *ate*, and the thesis that madness is central to tragedy. Badly stated, this is not sustainable: tragedies in which madness does not figure readily spring to mind. And Padel does not state the thesis baldly: it is not 'real' (one is tempted to say 'literal') madness that is in question, but 'hyperbolic' madness (p. 194) — although (alert as ever to cultural difference) Padel is quick to remind us that the line between real and hyperbolic madness might not have been drawn by Greeks where we would draw it. But if we ask what counts as hyperbolic madness, the answer is behaviour (especially behaviour that violates divine or social rules) contrary to the agent's interest (p. 195). But now that the concept of madness has been stretched so thin, one wonders whether it retains sufficient distinctive content to be illuminating.

Here, then, as with the claims about metaphor (which recur, though they are given less prominence, in the present book), I have the feeling that the attempt to formulate an overarching thesis has failed to advance us. Other instances could be cited of a lack of precision and clarity in the handling of conceptual points. For example, a failure to fully disentangle chronic from latent illness undermines the argument that Greek madness is episodic not chronic, long-term madness consisting of 'a chronic susceptibility to obvious, temporary mad fits' (p. 35), fails to account for one of Padel's own examples, Philocleon in Aristophanes' *Wasps*, his chronic madness is manifested not in sporadic frenzy, but in the sustained eccentricity of his behaviour. Again, the comparison of the multiple and conflicting demands which their gods made on Greeks to the schizophrenogenic double-bind of modern psychology (pp. 214f) has not been thought through properly. Double-bind involves something more specific than being subject to conflicting demands from various sources —

which is surely a common human experience (it does not need gods: anyone who recognizes, for example, the claims of family, friends and employer is likely to experience such conflicts)

But these reservations do not greatly weaken my enthusiasm for Padel's work. She described her method in the earlier book as 'descriptive and phenomenological rather than analytic' (p. ix), and what I found most valuable in it was the wonderful accumulation of detailed observations, unexpected connections and illuminating analogies; through these Padel contrived to demonstrate just how profoundly alien Greek ways of thinking were, while at the same time conveying a compellingly vivid impression of how these patterns of thought made sense and could be coherently lived. If I found the sequel less exciting, this is partly because it inevitably went back over some of the ground that its predecessor had made familiar; but I felt, too, that the terse economy of Padel's earlier style shows signs of giving way to a certain self-indulgence, its arresting individuality degenerating into irritating eccentricity. Nevertheless, *Whom Gods Destroy* is a book which will reward careful reading by anyone interested in how the Greeks thought, or (more generally) in the diversity of human self-understanding.

MALCOLM HEATH

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Music and the Origins of Language: Theories from the French Enlightenment. By DOWNING A. THOMAS. Cambridge U.P. 1995. xi + 195 pp. £30.

THIS VOLUME in CUP's series *New Perspectives in Music History and Criticism* studies the role played by ideas about the origin, purpose and meaning of music in French eighteenth-century speculation concerning the origins of language. The main authors studied are Rousseau, Diderot, Rameau and Condillac. Thomas adopts an interdisciplinary approach, as befits a study of writings that themselves fit neatly into no one discipline but situate music in a wider cultural context. He aims at an overview that goes beyond mere retelling of anecdotes and beyond history of ideas in aesthetics. The actual character of his book, though, is very much a history of ideas. As such, it provides an invaluable

chronicle of some fascinating developments in the idea of a musical language within neo-classical theories of representation.

Chapter 1, 'Music and language', examines the widely shared eighteenth-century view that music is a kind of language. The author reads eighteenth-century music theory as having a complexity that belies any simple opposition between music as representational of speech and absolute music. This reading emerges from the survival of a rhetorical conception of music beyond the demise of its crudely representational elements such as lists of correspondences between musical keys and affects. This survival evinced a concern with eloquence and persuasion, with the effects of music on the emotions, and thus with its potential for the building of consensus and community. Perhaps because his focus is on music theory rather than the practice of musical composition or performance, Thomas underplays the use of rhetorical categories as models for large-scale musical structures, e.g. the structuring of a whole aria according to the six-part *dispositio* of a classical speech, or the modelling of small-scale musical devices on those of rhetoric by means of various figures of repetition and gradation. These aspects of musical rhetoric survived well into the Romantic period.

Chapter 2, 'Origins', shows how the eighteenth century moved from recounting ancient myths about origins (e.g. in Bourdelot's *Histoire de la musique*, 1715) to works such as Blainville's *Histoire générale, critique et philologique de la musique*, 1769, which, while retaining some of that methodology of citation, begin to postulate empirical hypotheses to explain culture as an extension of (non-human) nature. If a naturalized account can be given of the origin of language then culture (linguistic culture anyway) can be traced back to nature, and the conventional representations of language can be traced back to an original natural representation. Condillac and Rousseau break decisively with this tradition by seeking the origin of music in the nature of the human voice and postulating a proto-voice as common origin of both speech and song.

Chapters 3 and 4 (on Condillac and Rousseau) draw out the assumption that music is a natural sign of the passions predating con-

ventional language. As a natural representation it promises to be a foundation for a general theory of representation. The interdisciplinarity of the author's approach comes to the fore in Chapter 3, where he uses Lacanian ideas to elucidate Condillac's hypothesis (*Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines*, 1746) that language originated with sympathetic gestures and cries responding to another's natural cry of emotion. He notes the 'essentially operative' quality of these postulated originary encounters, and shows how Condillac thought of the increasing analytical exactitude of modern languages as resulting from language's demusicalization.

What is represented by Condillac as a trade-off becomes a devastating loss for Rousseau. Chapter 4 gives a wide-ranging and penetrating analysis of Rousseau's extraordinary *Essai sur l'origine des langues* (published posthumously in 1781), situating it in relation both to Condillac and to Rameau. The *Essai* is concerned with the 'cultural, linguistic, and political presuppositions' of Rameau's mathematically inspired music theory, which Rousseau aimed to discredit as incapable of explaining anything but the physical properties of music. Thomas' ability to transcend the narrow boundaries of musicology is again evidenced in this discussion, which constructs a brilliant synthesis of a wide range of relevant material ranging from Plato's *Cratylus* to Hacking and Derrida. While finding Derrida's commentary 'powerful', and indeed while drawing extensively on it, Thomas maintains contra Derrida that 'the destiny of music' is the *Essai*'s central preoccupation. Rousseau's original language is characterized as energetic, sonorous and pleasurable, and thus as musical.

A minor critical point here. Thomas (pp. 102-3) attributes to Du Marsais (*Encyclopédie* 1:66) a definition of *accent* as 'the degree of elevation of the voice', which Thomas glosses as 'pitch'. Perhaps a more relevant gloss would refer to the musical sense of *accent* as illustrated by François Couperin's *table des agréments* where it is explained as a particular type of expressive pitch-fluctuation.

The book is rounded off by a chapter which explores various writings about music and the passions (notably Diderot's *Leçons de clavecin*).

These writings, which take the affective dimension of knowledge to be part of human culture in a broad sense, show an increasing concern with reception and interpretation.

PAUL THOM

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A Measured Pace: Towards a Philosophical Understanding of the Arts of Dance. By FRANCIS SPARSHOTT. University of Toronto Press. 1995. xviii + 580pp. Hardback £48.75, paperback £16.00.

THIS is another 'big' book by Francis Sparshott, in two senses, with 462 pages of text and 100 pages of notes and references. It is a companion volume to his *Off The Ground: First Steps Towards a Philosophical Understanding of Dance* (Princeton U.P., 1988), a text which (reviewers were surprised to find) did not discuss in detail the art of dance. Rather it dealt, as Sparshott puts it here, with 'what it is to dance and to be a dancer' (p. 453). Now we know why Sparshott was saving that discussion of art for the extended treatment it receives in the volume under review. Thus 'the present volume . . . [treats] dance undertaken professionally as a performance art for a public' (p. 453). But, Sparshott urges, such treatment brings us time and again to 'that insistent ambiguity of the dancer, as visual image, as physical object, as animal body, as human body, as character, as person' (p. 453). These ideas are explicitly related to 'an extensive review of the general problematic of the philosophy of art' (p. xvi) (articulated elsewhere by Sparshott), but a specific fine art will be worth discussion when, like dance, 'its medium offers special opportunities and challenges, special resources of meaning and affect, in such a way that it may . . . open up a distinctive range of insights' (p. 455). In this way, then, the book's 'real subject is the connections between the ideas, aspects of the structure of the world of conscious culture' (pp. xvi-xvii).

Overall, the book is organized into three parts: *Kinds of Dance*, which looks at the classification of dances and as ways of understanding them; *Dance and Related Fields*, which considers dance in relation to music, language and theatre; and *Aspects of Dance*, which investi-

gates notions of value, choreography, spectating, identity and recording for dances.

The breadth of this text means that it evades summary; further, there are a huge number of issues broached, to 'respect the extent and density of the domain of thought and action in which dancing is done' (p. 457). And, as Sparshott notes, its structure is 'by no means linear' (p. 6). Nevertheless, individual sections represent sustained discussions of key topics, some familiar to writers on dance (or art), some new or distinctive. My own favourite was the discussion, in Chapter 20, of the recording of dance — where Sparshott gives more coverage to TV, film and video than is common. And every topic he raises, he graces.

Moreover, as with others of Sparshott's books, the importance of the notes must be recognized. They are a contribution to the argument, as well as a display of impressive erudition. For instance, Sparshott deploys his argument for the interpretive character of movement analyses partly through a note (p. 470, note 1) which brings together criticisms elaborated elsewhere. Unfortunately, relegating a topic to a note leads to its getting a brief treatment, and brief treatments are not obviously fair. To give a personal example, we are told, in respect of the discussion of the explanation of dance in my *Understanding Dance* (Routledge, 1992), that I argue that '[e]xplanations are verbal constructs' (p. 501, note 5). No doubt Sparshott's view is *arguable* as an interpretation of what I do or *should* say, in spite of my actually saying 'an explanation of dance might involve things other than words. Gestures might be used' (p. 122). But in the text we are not given Sparshott's arguments. And finding one such dubious simplification must make us doubt *other* claims in the intricate and diffuse work. But this is minor, even for a cavil.

The audience for this book requires a philosophical sophistication, since we do not get detail of, say, Sartre's ideas, although extensive use is made of some of them; and, as Sparshott notes, a familiarity with his other works will be an advantage. But also the book is unpromising in its assumption (not justified in this reviewer's case) that the audience's erudition — especially dance-erudition — will match

the author's; one needs to have a pretty good grasp on key dance works to see the full force of Sparshott's insights into them. (And this extends beyond needing to be sure that a 'parergon' (p. xvi) is indeed a subsidiary work.) So it is a text which stimulates us to find out as well as to understand.

In addition, the discussion proffers a model of the philosophical enterprise. As Sparshott puts it, his procedure is 'philosophically impure. If philosophy has to do with meanings *rather than* facts, the meanings can only be the meanings of facts of some sort or other' (p. 7). We might prefer to see this as a new delimitation of the scope of philosophy, one that acknowledges its connection to the world of practice — good news for aestheticians!

Sparshott reports that his work on dance was stimulated by his 'being rebuked for saying so little about dance in my general works' (p. xvi). We should all be glad that he responded by producing two fine works of philosophical investigation, of which this is the one most directly relevant to readers of this journal. It is a masterly foray by a contemporary master.

GRAHAM MCFEE

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L'œuvre de l'art: immanence et transcendance By
GÉRARD GENETTE. Seuil, Paris 1994. pp 300
150F

THE PROBLEM of what art is, where it is and what constitutes the work of art when it goes beyond the question of the material nature of paintings and sculptures is again raised in this interesting account in search of 'immanence' and 'transcendence'. 'Immanence' is taken as meaning the type of object the artwork is, following Goodman's classification of the autographic and the allographic. 'Transcendence' is then the means by which a work exceeds this immanence with all sorts of aspects, versions, attitudes, etc. added to it and enriching it.

Genette begins the book with apologies for writing as a literary writer about aesthetics, art and philosophy but justifies his contribution with the comment that literature is also art and that poetics belong to aesthetics in the sense of being the canto of the theory of art. So he is writing with the desire to broaden the field of vision.

The book takes the form of an intellectual journey, or perhaps more exactly the development of Genette's ideas. It is as if he were working out his ideas as he writes, defining, developing, commenting and then moving on to the next stage. Perhaps as a consequence the book at first seems fragmented and confusing but once the reader has adjusted to the style of writing, the ideas begin to resonate and the elaboration becomes addictive. Genette relies heavily on Goodman's views of the art object for the development of his own and so just how new or original these ideas are is questionable but there is much of interest in the book.

The concept of immanence in art is carefully examined in the first part. Genette is at pains to explore different aspects of art, attempting to classify them while pondering exactly which aspects might be chosen. By the end of the book the development has advanced along more abstract lines, grappling with the concept of transcendence and the ways in which the basic artwork can be exceeded. His definition of art is broad so as to include not only all performing arts but cookery, architecture, circus, spectacles, etc. This means that the dividing lines between art, craft and skills often become blurred.

It is intriguing to observe the sheer range of what he has imagined as exceeding a basic work, considering what it adds, detracts, alters, destroys, etc. He discusses, for example, the artistic status of copies, fakes, and reproductions, with considerations of damaged art (the Venus de Milo), restored art (the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel), translated literary works, and transposed musical compositions.

He also offers valuable reflections on the question of what constitutes a literary work. Is it a collection of words in a specific order, or a collection of sounds, or a collection of ordered meanings? What happens to a work when edited? translated? abridged? illustrated? or when the print of a particular edition is changed? Do we get another version of the same work or another work? Goodman's absolute identity between literary work and its textual notation means that a translation by definition must be a distinct work. Genette is not so sure, since for him, while a text might be defined by sameness of spelling, a literary

work is defined by sameness of meaning. So translations become different texts of that literary work, not different works. Variations of a text are limited by a common semantic identity which transcends linguistic variations, but because of that semantic identity which is already established the translator does not have the creative freedom of the author. So, Genette wonders, does this restricted act not diminish the aesthetic worth of the translation?

There are similar conditions laid down for musical variations of a score. A score can be varied in speed, pitch, timbre, or transcribed for a different instrument. Here the essential criterion for Genette is structure; the piece retains a common structure even when raised, lowered, speeded up or slowed down.

How should we classify variations to manuscripts of texts and scores? Which one is the artwork? Scholars place great importance on the noted variations of literary texts and musical scores, poring over them to calculate their importance and significance. At what point is the work complete? And do the different variations, however minor or major, produce a whole new work? Genette differs from Goodman on this point of identity, since for Genette such alterations are a matter of variations on one particular work (score or text). For Genette variations are more a development of the work — a transcendence of it — and so a legitimate reworking. Goodman on the other hand sees a separation between a musical work and a score, identifying the musical work with the class of 'executions' determined by notation. For Genette this is questionable. In general he sees an unclarity in the relations between versions and works yielding different options: (i) only the first version of a work is the work and others are merely copies or variations; (ii) the first version is the draft and only the final version is the work; (iii) all versions are versions of the same work homonymous but distinct.

Genette states that he sees a problem here in Goodman's account of autographic works whereby copies of prints, for example, are all instances of the original work. Should not the nominalist position consider each edition of a work as distinct works or perhaps the original impression as the only true work and the others as copies? For Genette the acceptance in prac-

tice of all prints as works of art forces us to accept the plurality of immanence of works in multiple editions.

Since, Genette says, the artworld in general accepts multiple prints, etc., as one work in several versions so the strict nominalist's position becomes untenable. For him a theory of art which takes no account of customary assumptions in the artworld is invalid. Plurality of art versus unique immanence is explored at length as are the degrees of variations, copies, additions, cuts, etc., and their part in moving this immanence to transcendence.

All in all the impressive detail of this book, together with the perennially interesting questions it raises, makes it compulsive and rewarding reading.

CECILIA J. HYNES-HIGMAN

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Aesthetic Matters: Essays Presented to Goran Sörbom on his 60th Birthday. Edited by LARS-OLOF ÅHLBERG and TOMMIE ZAINE. Enheten för Kulturstudier, Uppsala University, Sweden: 1994. pp. 185. No price given

FESTSCHRIFTEN ARE NOT necessarily prestigious publications, and a reviewer approaches this genre with some reluctance. The prejudice is that overworked academics, on receiving an invitation to contribute, have opened their files under 'rejected manuscripts' and found something that could be worked over quickly 'to fit the bill'. The present volume, however, contains a number of interesting articles that have a lot to teach most readers interested in 'aesthetic matters'. The topics of the papers vary from an examination of the background to Schönberg's break with tonality, to discussions of anti-essentialism in contemporary aesthetics. However, as the dedicatee, Göran Sörbom, is a renowned scholar of the early development of aesthetics, it is surprising that none of the articles contribute to his field.

The sixteen contributors are all prominent aestheticians from the USA, Britain and of course the Nordic countries (three of the latter write in their native languages), and the names of most of them are known from the pages of this journal. It is impossible to do any kind of justice to such a rich variety of articles, and the

contributions not mentioned are not devalued by my choice.

One of the editors, Lars-Olof Åhlberg, is represented with an overview article that can be seen to tie in with his other work on the subject of anti-essentialism in aesthetics. Much relevant material is brought to attention, and the main theme is that the rather sweeping criticism of aesthetics in general, and analytical aesthetics in particular, from certain 'post-whatever' quarters misses its target, as analytic aesthetics tends to anti-essentialism. Åhlberg's article is clearly and well written, but too broad in its sweep to bring the relevant discussions much further.

The other editor, Tommie Zaine, discusses literary art and its artworld with reference to Dickie's institutional analysis of art. Like most of us, Zaine finds that Dickie's analysis leaves something to be desired, and proposes to find it in the history and empirical background of literary art. Zaine provides little in the way of examples, unfortunately, but develops a likely division of labour between different categories of judges, whose proper functions come in at different stages in the life of the proposed literary works of art. The first in line is, of course, the author. He or she proposes to the editor or publisher that the work is a work of art, and the latter evaluates and publishes some of those that satisfy these judges. Next are the critics and reviewers of contemporary literature, who are guides to the remaining categories of judge as to which works are works of art, and why that is so. The common reader receives this opinion directly from the critics, or through intermediaries such as librarians and other readers. A short article does not afford Zaine much space for empirical evidence, but my experience is that a good reviewer will seek to give the reader an informed opinion of whether or not the work is worthwhile, but the question 'is it art?' is seldom, if ever, even implicitly asked or answered. This is different when it comes to the last category of judge Zaine brings in: the revisers. These are typically literary historians, scholars, and new generations of critics. I believe it is more credible to say that it is the revisers who judge whether or not a novel or a poem is a work of art, rather than the contemporary readers and reviewers, who

are more likely to judge whether or not it is a good read. Zaune's article is interesting and useful, but one is left wondering why he has not chosen a more sophisticated institutional theory of literature, such as that of Stein Haugom Olsen, as his target.

Haugom Olsen is represented with 'The Role of Theory in Literary Studies', where he gives more substance to the distinction between 'literary theory' and 'literary aesthetics' first introduced in the last chapter of his book *The End of Literary Theory*. The first category, the quoted representatives of which are Culler, Eagleton, Belsey and Easthope, try to introduce a strong concept of theory, which purports to provide knowledge by establishing general propositions about literature, and where argumentative strategies typically include the use of terms like 'show' and 'demonstrate'. Haugom Olsen says that these terms have their proper place in the so-called hard sciences, but when used in the humanities to invoke 'his master's voice', be it Freud, de Saussure, Lacan or Derrida, it is a futile gesture which counts for nothing in the absence of a reasoned argument. Theoretical reflection in literary studies antedates the arrival of 'literary theory', and there is no reason to dispense with 'literary aesthetics' or with philosophy in general when it comes to pursuing inquiries into the evaluation and interpretation of literature. I recommend this article to anyone interested in the role of theoretical reflection in the literary arts.

Many of the contributions are inspired by the philosophy of Wittgenstein, but few try to emulate his style. The only exception is Tomas Hård af Segerstad's 'Reflections on Reflections', a set of paragraphs in a style similar to that of the *Philosophical Investigations*, and also with frequent reference to Wittgenstein. The result is intriguing, but seems to promise more than it delivers. The questions posed are worth pursuing further, though.

Sörbom has been chairman of the Department of Aesthetics at Uppsala University for more than twenty years, and his successful leadership of the institution has been guided by his interest in the interdisciplinary study of the arts. Both the varied subject matters and the quality of the contributions to this collection constitute a fitting tribute to Sörbom as a

pivotal figure for aesthetics in the Nordic countries.

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Authenticities: Philosophical Reflections on Musical Performance. By PETER KIVY. Cornell UP 1995. pp. 299. £27.50

AS APPLIED to music, the concept of authenticity has received relatively little detailed attention from professional philosophers. This seems surprising, given the inherent complexity of the concept and the aesthetic problems to which it has given rise. Musicians and musicologists, for their part, have certainly been aware of the need for philosophical reflection on the contradictions raised by the musical usage — or rather usages — of the term, as Joseph Kerman, Richard Taruskin and others have shown. However, the kind of critical discussion on authenticity that has occurred in particular among historical musicologists has not really been systematic in any philosophical sense, and has understandably tended to focus on practical and technical issues to do with performance or — more rarely — composition. In fact, it is safe to say that the idea of 'authenticity' in music has been hijacked by the historically authentic performance movement to such an extent that any other employment of the term in a musical context has been effectively eclipsed. At the same time, this exclusive and restrictive usage of the concept has frequently resulted in an unreflective and uncritical form of thinking about the performance of early music that has risked becoming dogmatic and self-satisfied, unable to question its own essentially positivist assumptions.

Of the three big areas of music which present themselves ready-made to the philosopher — i.e. the spheres of composition, performance, and reception — Peter Kivy takes the second as the focus of his important new book, *Authenticities*. As indicated by the title, Kivy talks here of performance authenticity in the plural. His approach, characterized by that beguilingly casual, common-sense, ordinary language style which has become his trade mark, is to start lexicographically by turning to the definitions of 'authenticity' in the *OED*.

This disarming tactic, based perhaps on the assumption that this is where most musicians and musicologists get their own working definitions from, rather than from turning to philosophical sources, provides Kivy with four useful categories. He distinguishes between (i) authenticity as intention (that is, 'what the composer intended'), (ii) authenticity as sound (that is, 'how the music sounded then'), (iii) authenticity as practice (that is, 'how the music was played'); and (iv) authenticity in what he regards as the ahistorical sense of personally authentic to the individual performer (that is, as he puts it, 'faithfulness to the performer's own self, original, and not derivative or an aping of someone else's way of playing'). These categories, in turn, provide him with the structure of his book.

In Part One, after a brief initial chapter addressing the concept of authenticity in order to set up his strategy, he examines each of his four categories in analytical detail, attempting to clarify concepts through what he regards (questionably, in my view) as value-free analysis. Part Two, which mirrors Part One, deals with the establishment of aesthetic norms and value judgements in relation to the purportedly value-free categories set up in Part One. While this literary device is an attractive one, in that the reader gets the chance to revisit the earlier discussions at another level in the second part of the book, it is also an elegant conceit. The claim that the initial exposition provides a value-free and objective clarification of concepts is not borne out, nor does it need to be. The judgements pronounced in the second part are, of course, already clearly evident in the first, richly larding the work of definition and clarification. Kivy's conclusions in the second part of the book therefore come as no surprise, and are none the worse for that.

Kivy proceeds with great deliberation in the early stages of the book, setting up his arguments carefully — even pedantically, as he himself wryly admits. No step is skipped and no stone left unturned in the process of clarifying the key concepts he is employing and which, he argues, underlie and may also serve to undermine many of the claims of the historical authenticity movement. Part of his strategy in putting forward a critique of assumptions frequently

made by early music devotees is to formulate engaging counterfactual questions of the 'what if . . .' variety: what would a composer like, for example, Bach choose to do under the greatly altered conditions of performance in the late twentieth century? It is not possible here to do justice to the intricate detail of his arguments, thought experiments and, importantly, the musical examples he skilfully uses to inform them, so a few pivotal instances must suffice in illustration.

In his analysis of authenticity as intention, and following Randall R. Dipert's work, Kivy argues that there is a hierarchy of composers' intentions that needs to be recognized. Put simply, he suggests that there is a higher-level set of intentions regarding the aesthetic effect that is intended, and a lower-level set of intentions directed towards the achievement of that effect. Like Dipert, he argues for the priority of the higher over the lower. Kivy emphasizes that the implications of his analysis of the concept of authenticity as intention are that the attempt to realize a deceased composer's intentions as regards present-day performance is more than a matter of following faithfully the instructions left by the composer, and which refer now to performance under very different historical conditions. It is always a matter of interpretation, involving a 'reunderstanding' of performing intentions in relation to the current conditions under which they are to be realized.

Within his second category of authenticity — authenticity as sound — Kivy distinguishes usefully between (i) the objective physical facts of the phenomenon of a performance, which he calls *sonic* authenticity, and (ii) the authenticity of what is (or historically was) consciously heard (for instance, not consciously noticing the sound of a passing horse and carriage in the street outside a concert hall during a performance, or inattention to the clicking of the jacks in the harpsichord's mechanism) which he calls *sensible* authenticity. He argues here that the early music movement may restore to us historically authentic musical sound, but does this at the expense of what he calls historical listening. It gives us *sonic* authenticity, but takes away *sensible* authenticity. He insists that we need a conceptual framework within which to perceive, place and understand a performance,

in order to experience it. Strangely, the historical authenticity movement tends to deny us the enrichment provided by the retrospective experience of historical distance through its puritanical insistence that we should hear the music as it was then.

The third of his categories, authenticity as practice, Kivy sees as the most problematical. Is it, indeed, really a separate category at all, in that performance can simply be seen as the means to realize the composer's intention and achieve the sound he or she would have heard? He points to the need to separate the archaeological dimension of authenticity in performance from the aesthetic, in order to avoid the *reductio ad absurdum* of performances in wigs and buckle shoes. The solution, so he insists once more, is interpretation, of informed choices in the light of aesthetic needs and of historical context.

Both parts of the book culminate in the consideration of the fourth category — that of *personal* authenticity, a category Kivy sees as fundamentally different from the first three. He argues that, as a result of the historical authenticity movement, with its obsession with authentic sources, editions, sound, and so on, the status of the work as 'object' and the authority of the composer's intentions have been elevated over that of the performer. The performer is now regarded merely as the executor of the 'true text', and the idea of the work is seen in terms of linguistic models and is therefore associated with some notion of truth. The gap between performer and work has been reduced, with the result that the performer increasingly has less freedom of interpretation. Kivy considers the performance itself to be a work of art, distinguishable from the 'work as object', and it is in the gap between performance-as-artwork and work-as-artwork that he sees the essential improvisatory freedom of performance as lying. The problem is that performance, as a result, for example, of the archaeological activities of musicologists, has a tendency to collapse into the work as text, as what was originally improvisatory and decorative becomes fixed and structural.

The consistent theme running through Kivy's book is the need for interpretation as the personal authenticity and authority of the performer against the ideology both of the

composer as genius and of the puritanical devotion to the authority of the text of the early music devotees. As Kivy admits, his aesthetic arguments come to the end of their tether in his final chapter and then turn into ethical, even rhetorical ones, appearing to appeal to some higher authority. This is indeed a vision of the performer as hero, finding personal authenticity in the ever-decreasing gap between the freedom of performance as interpretation and the fixity of the work as text. Despite the easy-going and unmistakably American tone of Kivy's writing, there is more than a dash of old-fashioned European Existentialism to be detected here, suggesting a very different notion of authenticity — truth to self — to that of the positivism of the historical performance movement. What this book does, quite remarkably, is to bring us to the limits of its own particular style of writing aesthetics, leaving us both impressed by its thoroughness within its own terms of reference and at the same time bothered by its evident lack of a theory that can give a satisfying account of the frequently evoked notion of 'context' — social, cultural or historical. What becomes apparent is the absence of any real philosophy of history within Kivy's toolkit which can adequately account for the predicament of performance practice in the twentieth century. It hardly seems credible that this predicament could be laid solely at the door of the historical performance practitioners or even blamed on the overweening composers of the Great Tradition. But for all that, this is a most valuable book, one which constantly surprises and delights through its philosophical insights and informed musical understanding. It illuminates much, even through its absences.

MAX PADDISON

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The Question of Style in Philosophy and the Arts

Edited by CAROLINE VAN ECK, JAMES McALLISTER and RENÉE VAN DE VALL. Cambridge U.P. 1995 pp. 245. £35.00.

THIS COLLECTION is an uneasy amalgam. On the evidence of it, the question of style in philosophy is not at all like the question of style in the arts, and neither of these is the same as the

question of style in the philosophy of art. The collection falls apart accordingly. To take the last first: Richard Wollheim's essay 'Style in Painting', a follow-up to his well-known earlier writings on the subject, and best read in light of them, is the only piece in the book to deal philosophically with the concept of style as it might be applied to works of art or their creation. It is, as one would expect, an elegant, urbane performance, which draws or redraws distinctions that some of the other contributors would have done well to note, not least the distinction between 'individual' and 'general' style; and it ends with one of those psychoanalytical flourishes that always makes me want to go back and read something deeper into Wollheim's elegance and urbanity. But as the only piece of philosophical aesthetics in the collection it does stick out somewhat.

History rather than philosophy comes to the fore in the essays on style in the arts. In a nice pairing, consecutive pieces by J. Mordaunt Crook and Caroline van Eck give contrasting accounts of the origins of stylistic pluralism in late eighteenth-century architecture. Both are convincing, and neither displaces the other, yet nor does either notably increase one's understanding of the central concept, style. And this is still more true of the other art historical contribution, Mary-Klinger Lindberg's 'Stylist Strategies in William Hogarth's Theatrical Satires'. I was rather slow on the uptake with this one. An apparently unsophisticated account of four Hogarth prints, the piece is written with such unreflected earnestness that the likelihood of its author's engaging with the satirical at any level seemed increasingly remote. But the cumulative weight of passages such as the following finally had their effect: 'By choosing a theatrical subject for the first engraving he published, Hogarth shows himself an enterprising artist and an alert playgoer fighting for literary and theatrical standards. He must have been confident that his print buyers would be interested too, since they shared the same entertainment experiences.' The penny dropped at last: Lindberg had gone for exemplification.

Quite what Lambert Wiesing had gone for, though, I never did decide. In his attempt to 'establish a systematic link between the works of the artist Kurt Schwitters and those of the

philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein', Wiesing lets Schwitters get away with saying first that 'style becomes a concept of truth' and then that we should have 'style *instead* of truth'. Put this together with Wiesing's seeming belief that when the true/false distinction is marginalized in Wittgenstein's work the sense/nonsense distinction is marginalized as well, and the negative features of his strategy, at any rate, become obvious. If Wiesing had something substantive in mind here, it did not make its way across to me. But philosophy fares better elsewhere. There is a solid piece from Berel Lang arguing that philosophical methods always have a stylistic dimension, and so are 'expressive' rather than transparent, and there are essays by Nicholas Davey and Dorothea Franck exploring the dilemma that the recognition of this fact poses for the practice of philosophy. Davey's essay struck me as particularly successful in managing to agonize over the dilemma not too ostentatiously, while also making a forthright case against the claim that philosophy is reducible entirely to style. (The need to confront such nonsense is nowadays regrettably real — even if, as I am glad to report, hardly anyone in the present collection appears to subscribe to it. Wiesing, I suppose, may have hankennings, and Franck, with what the editors call 'poetical lucidity', does sail dangerously close to the wind. But Davey's sadly unredundant reminder that it is sometimes possible to see what a philosopher is 'getting at' should help to keep poetry in its place for a little while yet.)

Standing somewhat apart from these is a piece by James McAllister about style in scientific theory, where the perfectly plausible claim is made that the desirability of a stylistic trait such as simplicity is partly established on inductive grounds. And in another direction still, this time a Nietzschean direction, Charles Altieri suggests that the concept of style permits a richer sense of ethical responsibility than the usual one, while Salim Kemal argues — persuasively, but with a degree of optimism surely made available only by a corresponding degree of abstraction, here sustained — that Nietzsche's conception of style might underwrite a vision of 'a radical and healthy community of creators'. The political angle is

explored further by Frank Ankersmit who, in the collection's most satisfying critical exercise, shows how Tocqueville's style is perfectly tailored to his discussion of democracy. his style has 'exactly the same characteristics' as his subject, for 'democracy has no centre . . ., it has neither essence nor nature of its own.'

In that sense, at least, this collection is a very democratic one — which makes it hard to know what to say about the editors' introduction to it. Richard Wollheim, in the essay mentioned earlier, remarks that 'There should be no greater difficulty in extending' the notion of individual style 'to understand a work made by' several artists 'than the artists themselves would have in co-operating on the work: which was probably not negligible'; and it cannot be said that van Eck, McAlister and van de Vall have entirely surmounted this latter, non-negligible difficulty. Their introduction — well organized, full of good intentions and irredeemably flat-footed — reads exactly like the three-way effort it presumably was. In a book about style, of all things, it does seem quaint or worse to have decided to write as a committee. But the editors do offer a responsible enough survey of the essays to come; and if their introduction tends to collapse into a series of disparate episodes, then so too does the collection it introduces. *The Question of Style in Philosophy and the Arts* is, in at least one important sense, quite artless.

AARON RIDLEY

University of Southampton

Wittgenstein and Critical Theory: Beyond Postmodernism and Toward Descriptive Investigations.

By SUSAN B. BRILL. Ohio U.P. 1995. pp. 168.
£12.50

BRILL'S STUDY raises complex and challenging questions concerning Wittgenstein's philosophy and critical theory. The purpose of her book is to translate Wittgenstein's philosophy for literary scholars and apply it to literary texts, and to literary theory and criticism.

In her introductory chapter Brill presents Wittgenstein's philosophy as a method involving (i) language games, (ii) the rejection of theory, and (iii) the practice of descriptive investigation. She then applies Wittgenstein's

method to a variety of topics, ranging from the concerns of psychoanalytic and semiotic critical orientations to literary concerns of inclusivity and exclusivity (with reference to feminist literary concerns and a nascent canon of Native American literature). She also addresses concerns of literary and critical value and canonicity before concluding her study with a comparison of Wittgenstein's philosophy and deconstruction.

The range and scope of Brill's study is ambitious. She captures the spirit of Wittgenstein's method well when she describes it as both dynamic and responsive, and the topics which she addresses are interesting and engaging. However, it is the range and scope of her study which ultimately raises questions concerning both Wittgenstein's philosophical method and its subsequent application in the area of literary theory and criticism.

Brill presents a method of approaching texts which involves describing the language games in which texts participate. Brill connects these language games (variously) with 'authorial, socio-historical, geographical, psychological and linguistic contexts'. She often uses the term 'language game' interchangeably with terms such as 'context', 'culture' or 'linguistic practice'.

According to Brill, Wittgenstein rejects the 'universalizing absolutism of theory' and replaces it with a description of language games. The description of language games, as a rejection of absolutist theory, provides a method which allows for a diversity and plurality of approaches. Although the limits of specific theories must be clearly delineated, Brill claims that a Wittgensteinian approach to literature would not necessarily deny the usefulness of all literary theory.

Wittgenstein's philosophy does offer a method (or methods) for describing the use of our words (for the purpose of conceptual clarification). The use of language-games is one of Wittgenstein's specific grammatical techniques. Wittgenstein does not, however, use the term 'language-game' as synonymous with terms such as 'context' or 'culture'. For example, Wittgenstein refers to a multiplicity of language-games within the following examples: asking, thanking, cursing, greeting and pray-

ing. Other examples include reporting, lying, telling a joke, or describing one's room (or describing one's mind, a facial expression, a sensation of touch, a mood, or a body's position).

Language-games, for Wittgenstein, involve the use of particular words. It is difficult, therefore, to know how this concept of language-games corresponds to a concept of language-games 'in which texts participate'. The difference between these two interpretations becomes clear when we examine Wittgenstein's rejection of theory. For Wittgenstein, the rejection of theory is an integral part of his descriptive method. For Brill, however, the rejection of theory is merely qualified; the limitations of specific theories are noted, but theories are seen as themselves contributing to our understanding of language-games.

Central to these interpretations is the question of *how* we describe the use of our words. This is perhaps the methodological question raised in the *Philosophical Investigations* and it leads Wittgenstein to reject theory and adopt a descriptive or grammatical form of investigation. Thus, while Brill claims that the use of Wittgenstein's method should not leave us feeling bereft of any of the critical stances available today, it is perhaps more accurate to say that Wittgenstein's rejection of theory, if correctly understood, should not leave us feeling bereft of such critical stances.

According to Brill, a Wittgensteinian-based criticism begins with the use of words. Therefore Brill challenges us to situate a literary text within its everyday use; to examine certain critical theories and methods in use; and to make textual selections based on their usefulness in particular cases. The justification for using Wittgenstein's method is itself its usefulness in 'opening up certain literary texts' and in resolving the conceptual confusion within and between diverse critical and theoretical approaches to literature. The concept of 'use' varies throughout Brill's writings, however, and it is not clear how the use of a word corresponds to the use of a text, (or to the use of a theory, a method or textual selections). Further, it is difficult to know on what basis we would determine 'usefulness'.

While Brill argues that Wittgenstein's method is responsive to diverse aspects of a

text, by being both respectful and attentive to the language of the text and its context(s), we may conclude by asking whether this, in fact, fully captures Wittgenstein's method and whether Wittgenstein's method is itself necessary for such a task. Brill's 'translation' raises questions concerning how we read and respond to Wittgenstein's philosophical texts, and her 'application' of Wittgenstein's method raises questions concerning the very nature and practice of literary criticism. What needs to be acknowledged, however, is the very real value and significance of these questions.

BETH SAVICKEY

University of Winnipeg

The Art of Living: Aesthetics of the Ordinary in World Spiritual Traditions. By CRISPIN SARTWELL. State University of New York Press. 1995. pp. 163. \$14.95.

This is a genial and engaging book which will be of great interest to philosophers from non-Western traditions who have waited, more or less patiently, for Western philosophers to notice that there are traditions other than their own. It firmly situates aesthetics in a world-cultural milieu and succeeds in shedding new light on old questions by doing so.

Sartwell raises familiar questions about the supposed End of Art, about the nature of cross-cultural comparison, about the viability of the distinction between art and craft, the relationship between art and technology (in an interesting discussion of Heidegger), and he does so in the context of a discussion of that favourite topic, the definition of art. He draws qualified inspiration from the work of Dewey and he makes many of the familiar moves about familiar definitions and their drawbacks, especially as they are extended across cultures. This is interesting material, which he handles well, especially when he comes to his own favoured definition of art in which he emphasizes the importance of process as well as product. Here he brings out very clearly the problem of the *bricoleur*, and restores our sense of the connections between means and ends in a way which allows him to make the traditionally ambitious move of so extending the definition of art that we can give good sense to the idea of 'an art of living'.

Although there is nothing 'correct' about his multiculturalism, Sartwell does tend to depreciate modern aesthetics and 'us in the west'. Although he is surely right to draw attention to the ways in which our readings, say, of oriental texts, can lead us to see our own cultural and artistic activities with a new perceptiveness, it is a pity that he trades on false dichotomies between east and west (c f recent writing by Mohanty and Daya Krishna) and a pity also that he saddles Kant with a mere formalism and disengagement. The pleasure that is 'apart from any interest' is *precisely*, I would suggest, the pleasure of the *absorption in an activity* that Sartwell makes so much of, in Kant's case the absorption is in the intense activity involved in the free play of imagination and understanding around the (embodied) aesthetic idea.

The extension of his process definition to living, however, has to be treated with the caution appropriate to entering a swamp. It is right to emphasize that means are not merely irritating hurdles to be got over in order to accomplish one's independently specifiable goals, and it is an impressive move to connect this conceptual point with the notion of *karma yoga*, but the 'art of living' move presents in an acute form the problem of the relation of aesthetics to ethics. It is interesting to connect the process definition of art with Thich Nhat Hanh's description of mindful action, but Sartwell needs to show that 'absorption', or 'living in the present', or 'devoted skill', and so forth, cannot be practised in the pursuit of evil or even merely venal ends. He simply assumes (p. 51) that a life devoted to the acquisition of power, wealth, or pleasure separates means and ends in the way he criticizes. But if there were a karma yogic approach to such pursuits, then we should have to look again at the notion of absorption in an activity and so forth as aspects of an ethical life. After all, in the Buddhist tradition it is the various defiling passions or *klesa* that need to be overcome if anyone is to achieve *bodhi* and that is the central context in which mindful action has its special significance. It is also the context in which the advice that one should not be preoccupied with the fruits of action has a particular relevance: the failure of mindfulness *here* stands in the way of liberation. It is what one is mindful *about* that

becomes important; maybe a person could be mindfully cruel. He also needs to show that his favoured Zen stance is not merely a fashionable and ideologically convenient distraction from other realities (including those of the craving aversion and ignorance that presumably determine the scope and energy of the absorption Sartwell admires).

Sartwell does address the issue of ethics in his chapter on the *Bhagavad Gita*, in which the idea of *karma yoga* and the renunciation of the fruits of action are crucially involved in Krishna persuading Arjuna to accept his caste duty. Sartwell does not raise any questions about the nature of the text, about whether, for instance, it might be an anti-Buddhist Brahmanial text that deploys Buddhist considerations in favour of the use of force. The real issue here is whether we are talking about arbitrary violence or the *unavoidable* use of force. It may be that one should not grieve about what is unavoidable, but one needs to be quite sure that what one does not grieve about is indeed unavoidable, and that issue remains unresolved and problematic. Sartwell relates the *Gita* to Kierkegaard's 'suspension of the ethical', but there are significant distinctions he does not give himself time to make. It may be necessary to overcome 'a too-great virtue', but showing that may require us to show what is wrong with it from an *ethical* point of view and we need to relate the abandonment of particular moral principles to a view of moral change which may need to be conceived in terms of moral insight rather than principle.

MICHAEL MCGHEE

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A Theory of Textuality. The Logic and Epistemology. By JORGE J. B. GRACIA. State University of New York Press, 1995. pp. 309. \$21.95.

A THEORY of *textuality*? Produced by an *analytic* philosopher? Whatever next? Gracia acknowledges that theory-building has not been popular among philosophers of Anglo-American stripe, and that the project might seem little more than an old-fashioned waste of time. However, this is not a pretentious book, despite its ambitious scope. Gracia announces his

aim rather coyly: his theory is intended as 'a model whose understanding should lead to a deeper comprehension of the difficult issues textuality poses'

Gracia emphasizes the importance of a number of distinctions. (Indeed, the book as a whole may be viewed as the working through of these distinctions.) Prominent among these is the distinction between text and work. The aim is then to establish how texts and their meanings are related to authors, audiences and contexts. Gracia identifies a three-fold confusion in thinking about textuality which is rooted in too narrow an understanding of textuality further compounded by piecemeal unsystematic approaches. Theorists are accused of having been insensitive to the distinction of logical, metaphysical and epistemological issues. The present volume concentrates on the logical and epistemological aspects, with the treatment of the metaphysical issues reserved for a second volume.

For Gracia, texts are group of entities, used as signs which are selected, arranged and intended by an author to convey some specific meaning to an audience. While both texts and signs relate to meaning, their identity conditions are different. As Gracia uses it, the term 'sign' has wide scope: it embraces headings, punctuation, emphasis and underlinings. He also stresses a distinction between meaning and significance which is redolent of one due to E. D. Hirsch — the relevance and importance of a text is not part of its meaning as such. And while texts and language share a semantic dimension, they too should not be confused. Language, for one thing, is not authored; rather it is an instrument authors use to produce texts. This makes the notion of text narrower and subject to more constraints. Texts are also artefacts, though, *pace* some modern theorists, not all artefacts are texts: 'Texts are meaningful artefacts whose meaning is the object of understanding.'

Gracia proceeds to address the concepts of art object and aesthetic object. He allows that artefacts not intended as art by their authors can become art as long as they are regarded both as artefacts and capable of producing an aesthetic experience. He tends to leave the issue of aesthetic experience itself underexplored, so

the characterization remains rather formal. So what are works? They are the meanings of text, for Gracia the sort of thing that could be conveyed by different texts, i.e. different groups of signs in his sense. But authors possess no infallibility: they do not have some 'intended text' which precedes the production of the finished item. (More contentiously, he allows that a real text can exist 'in the mind' as a product of internal processes, although he does not address the problems this might pose.) Authors often have only vague ideas about what they wish to convey. As to interpretation, Gracia sees this as amounting to the addition of a further text to the original, the purpose of this additional text being to produce in contemporary audiences acts of understanding which may well go beyond those of the author and the historical audience. Literary texts are special in that, on account of their structure and (cultural) function, they are intended to be understood differently by different people in different contexts.

Ultimately, Gracia's account must appeal to something universal, and the very identification of texts as texts relies 'on the view that all human beings behave and communicate in similar ways'.

Gracia's work is thorough and painstaking. On its own terms, it covers appropriate problems and concepts and endeavours to counter much of the obfuscation and self-indulgence of some other theoretical work in this area. Although for the most part clearly stated, his account is in places repetitious beyond the needs of useful interim summary, almost as if he were reminding himself as much as the reader of the stage reached in his analysis. On more specific matters, there are points of contention. Gracia rightly distinguishes between a text's meaning and its implications, but sees no need to give examples. This illustrates one frustrating aspect of the book — that without cluttering the discussion, he might have anchored his general points more effectively in a few well-chosen examples, even for the benefit of other analytic philosophers who do not normally like to soil their hands with such impurities. (Gracia mentions very few actual works, literary or otherwise.) Some readers might also take issue with his claim that truth

and falsity, as opposed to effectiveness, do not apply to interpretations. This was the one place where Gracia is uncharacteristically obscure.

Throughout, Gracia makes critical points against postmodernists, deconstructionists and others from what he no doubt considers to be the Kingdom of Darkness, and while these points may have some force, they unfortunately have the appearance of verbal 'side-swipes' begging for fuller articulation. With a second volume in prospect, overall judgement of the theory must be postponed. On the strength of this book, it should not be greeted with indifference.

DENIS POLLARD

University of Glamorgan

On Hume and Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics: the Philosopher on a Swing. By GIANCARLO CARABELLI. Trans. Joan Krakover Hall. Peter Lang, New York. 1995. ix. + 222pp No price given.

This is a strange book in many ways. It consists of three parts, two of which directly concern Hume. The third, however, does not mention Hume, and has nothing much to do with him. Since the third part is much the longest, this makes the book's title somewhat misleading.

The first of the essays — entitled 'Sancho's Cask' (because most attention is paid to an example from *Don Quixote*) — is a reflection on Hume's essay 'Of the Standard of Taste'. I say 'reflection on' because it is not obviously an argument about, or philosophical interpretation of Hume, or even a systematic exposition of the essay. What is found to be recurrent in Hume and elsewhere is the idea that aesthetic taste oscillates between personal absorption on the one hand and disinterested detachment on the other. Humean ideas are said to reflect this (though on the very same grounds they might be thought to vacillate between the two) — hence the reference in the subtitle to the 'The Philosopher on a Swing'.

This feature of oscillation is found again in Hume's essay 'Of the Middle Station of Life' in which he defends the claim that the life of the middle aged and middle class is likely to be the happiest. The 'oscillation' this time is perhaps confused with a *via media*; the middle

classes, and especially the professional classes stand at a mid-point between the mind-numbing labour of the workers and the mind-numbing pleasure seeking of aristocrats.

In the third essay, Hume is left behind. This essay concerns the English garden and in particular the introduction of the ha-ha or sunken boundary hedge. According to Carabelli this device of landscape gardening encapsulates an attempt to secure features of both gardens and countryside. In this way the theme of 'the swing' is continued, and the essay contains a lot of interesting material, but though there is some charting of themes and recording of ideas there is little of a philosophical nature in it, and nothing I feel able to comment authoritatively upon.

But if we return to Hume and to the first two essays, it has to be said that the method of argumentation is not altogether satisfactory. Ideas, and sometimes hints and suggestions, are set alongside each other on the assumption, as it seems, that the noting of vague resemblance is enough to establish a connection. Sometimes this technique leads to associations that can only be described as fanciful. For example, a large part of the essay consists in an extended reflection on the example of Sancho's cask, which Hume uses as an illustration. Carabelli finds parallels almost everywhere:

Sancho's cousins are not afraid of risking ridicule by giving a surprising judgement of a wine everyone says is good. In this they are not unlike their colleagues (as social operators of collective wisdom), the Catholic priests who do not fear ridicule when they find the taste of Christ's blood in the wine of the Eucharist (p. 26).

Just what is this sort of association supposed to establish or to illuminate?

There is a long passage devoted to expounding 'forms' of discussion — the crab, the double crab and so on. But it is quite unclear whether these 'forms' are analytical or descriptive, and in either case what their purpose is.

In one or two places there is serious error — the idea of invisible hand explanation, for instance, is poorly understood and confused with a vaguer idea of providence. And Carabelli does not seem to understand Hume's con-

trast between natural and artificial virtues, describing the latter as 'products of imagination'.

The second part of the book focuses on an essay of Hume's called 'Of the Middle Station of Life'. This is essentially slight, and recognized by Hume to be so, being omitted (along with some others) from subsequent editions of the collection in which it first appeared on the grounds that it was too inconsequential. Why then, does it warrant any, still less extended, attention? Carabelli simply asserts that 'If we think that Hume decided to eliminate these essays because they said too little, we may also think that he did it because they also said too much'. Maybe so, but we also need some *reason* to think this, and to my mind Carabelli does not give us any. The essay remains, as Hume held it to be, a piece of frivolity, hardly worth reading and even less studying.

Overall, Carabelli's book is an easy enough read, greatly assisted by a flowing and lucid translation. But, harsh though this may sound, it is true that for those interested in Hume and eighteenth-century philosophical aesthetics, despite the title, there is little to be learned from it.

GORDON GRAHAM

University of Aberdeen

Reading Blake's Designs. By CHRISTOPHER HEPPNER. Cambridge U.P. 1995. pp 302 £45.00.

THIS BOOK is symptomatic of the difficulties Blake presents to those ambitious of a faithful interpretation. Anxious to prove that Blake's 'system' should not be used to interpret his pictures, it goes too far in cutting these adrift from the writings. Literary critics, for their part, have often been chided for their failure to take into account Blake's graphic art when dealing with the poetry; and this failure becomes more obviously disabling when the 'illuminations' with which Blake surrounded his poems are ignored. Blake's ambition to produce a species of *Gesamtkunstwerk* means that we are simply neglecting his intentions when we delve into poetic ambiguity or explicate extended metaphor as if the startling design accompanying or surrounding the text did not exist. It is some

years now, though, since the point was generally taken; and those studies of Blake which concentrate on literary meaning will usually defer in some way to the importance of bringing the designs in evidence. Not that the evidence is easy to interpret: often a design will bear very little obvious relationship to the accompanying text, and one discovers that Blake has invented a medium where cross-references, parallels and counterpoints have to be pursued across whole books. The best study of this aspect of Blake's illuminated books remains W. J. T. Mitchell's *Blake's Composite Art* (1978).

Yet Blake's graphic art is by no means found only in his 'Illuminated Books'. There are great pictures, such as the 1795 Colour Prints, which offer relatively untrammelled scope to the art critic. But how untrammelled should such scope be? Blake's ideas, although they change over his lifetime, show many continuities; whatever period of his 'literary' and illuminated work one may look at, he brings an extraordinarily wide range of reference in support of strongly-held convictions, compressing it into large and deceptively simple-looking symbolic shapes. There is a sense in which Blake's mythology is hardly his own, being more like a series of quotations from Shakespeare, Dante, the Bible and primary mythologies. When Professor Heppner asks us to believe that there are 'no elements taken from Blake's poetic mythology' in his illustrations of the Bible, this is really a tendentious way (as his book shows) of asking us to accept that the mythology is irrelevant to interpretation. Yet on the face of it there could hardly be a more implausible claim, not least because Blake's mythology constitutes, indeed, his interpretation of the Bible. And the claim gives rise to a curious combination of misplaced rigour and ill-judged permissiveness in interpretation. The misplaced rigour consists in the zealous prohibition on references to Blake's poetic mythology. The ill-judged permissiveness asks us to accept, nevertheless, that all kinds of references to other works of art by Blake can help in interpretation, so long as they are not seen as references to the mythology; or that equivocal details in a painting should count for more than what we know of Blake's thought from 'liter-

ary' sources. This is to straim at a gnat and swallow a camel. Life would certainly be easier for the art critic if such an approach were to be accepted. That it should be mooted at all shows how far the fashion has changed away from anything approaching a totalizing view of Blake, or from the view that his system provides a master key. There may be a salutary caution to be learnt from this attitude, but it can be taken to the extent of perversity.

The first part of Heppner's book seems to trace both the character and development of Blake's language of the body and its gestures. It obviously subserves the aim of developing a well-supported method of assessing the significance of Blake's graphic art in isolation from the poetic mythology. Despite my reservations about the overall tendency of this book, this first part seems to me sensible, shrewd and valuable; and clearly this question can and should be proposed in isolation, at least in the first instance, for the purposes of discovery. Heppner adverts to the two sources of the language of the body in Blake's time, sculptural remains (and plaster casts of them) and rhetorical theory. The former encouraged the intuitive approach to the whole body; the latter encouraged artificiality, mannerism and an emphasis on the limbs. Michaelangelo, increasingly seen in the eighteenth century as the inventor of epic painting, was the artist whom most of all Blake copied, and from whom he borrowed most. In creating his own version of Michaelangelo, Blake tends more towards a rhetorical reading of him, partly encouraged by the fact that his knowledge was based on engravings. He ends up with a 'lexicon of embodied sentiments' which can be read off from hands, feet and limbs. Not very like Michaelangelo, but very much the developing tendency of Blake's art, with its decreasing reliance on the expressiveness of whole bodies (compare the Job illustrations) and its shift from noun to syntax in an array of bodies, where the relationships of figures and the gestures of their limbs are the chief clues to meaning.

The attempt to deal purely with Blake's art causes Heppner some anxiety about whether a body can have a univocal meaning, or whether one should always start with the total design

If one does the latter one is advancing a narrative, and thus 'attaching a text' (p. 71), which sounds worryingly like what literary critics do. Perhaps there is an element of 'undecidability' (p. 71), a fashionable word, but in the context of this rather paltry example of the hermeneutic circle, not productive of much interest.

It is just as well that Heppner is ready to seek external guidance, not from Blake, of course — one should be chary of a text by him — and not from a modern scholar who pays close attention to Blake's own words, namely Morris Eaves, whose *William Blake's Theory of Art* (1982) is, astonishingly, unmentioned. The guidance I refer to is to be sought in René Le Bossu's *Treatise of the Epick Poem*. In this we are advised first to find the 'point of Morality' we wish to establish, then embody it in action, then find a parallel story in history or fable and put the action under the names to be found in that. Heppner makes the point that this theory accords with Blake's emphasis on originality, in that the poet's invention comes first. It is certainly a suggestive text for the whole of Blake's oeuvre. Heppner cites it at the beginning of the second part of his book, in a preamble to the detailed study of a large selection of works. Yet by a rather obvious slippage he manages to move from Le Bossu's 'affirming the artist's freedom to invent around and over the text' (p. 104) to the claim that Blake is working sympathetically with many of the texts we had been crude enough to imagine he was subverting (Perhaps we had paid too much attention to Blake's assertion in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* that 'Opposition is true Friendship'.) Thus, discussing the illustrations to Young's *Night Thoughts*, Heppner claims that Blake 'respects the moral intent and the actively personifying imagination of Young, but feels . . . free to extend Young's values in directions of his own' (p. 170). These emollient phrases provide as good an example as any of the bald implausibility of the conclusions Heppner elicits with his rather narrow method, a method which allows him to ignore: (i) the influence of Locke on Young; (ii) the iconography of the illustrations in its connections both with Blake's other designs and with the classical iconographical traditions which can be shown to have influenced him; (iii) the status

of the *Night Thoughts* illustrations as running parallel with the symbolism of *Vala*.

In some ways it is probably just as well that Heppner is not more ready to deal with Blake's 'system': his discussion of the Colour Print *The Good and Evil Angels* (1795) is marked by a degree of prevarication and uncertainty which would at least have been rendered less fumbling by a firmer grasp of the complexities of interpreting Blake's 'poetic mythology'. Heppner is troubled by the fact that the 'Evil Angel' is shown blind, chained and in fire. The problem is that in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (c. 1790-1793), where almost the same image is to be found, there is a reversal of values such that 'Evil' represents Blake's Good, fire Energy, and Devils a liberating revolution in human affairs. Heppner alludes to Anne Mellor's interpretation that the dark angel in the later print represents 'creative Energy [that] has been devoured by reason and perverted into an instrument of oppression'. Some may find it tedious to agree with this well-pondered view, but the fact is that it is congruent with much that we know about Blake's thought, and it helps to make sense of the ambiguity of Blake's imagery — an ambiguity which is partly founded in Blake's troubled and ambivalent response to the course of the French Revolution (not in the index). Heppner does not care for this kind of interpretation, but in his anxiety to dissent can offer us only a brief and hurried recourse to the term 'undecidability' again. There are various other fusties in which a similar unwillingness to be guided by Blake, combined with a considerable willingness to be guided by almost anything else, including one's own whim, lead either to undecidability again (the discussion of *God Judging Adam*), or to a pedantry which cannot see the wood for the trees (the discussion of *The Sea of Time and Space*). As a foil to these procedures there is some tendentious retailing of Blake's supposed system, amounting to little more than parody.

As in his first part (on the language of the body) so in his second (more on particular

works), Heppner is better when he permits himself to hazard something approaching a general principle. His chapter on perspective is an interesting contribution to a subject not much discussed in Blake criticism. As he says, 'Perspective builds a space without real boundaries, characterized by abysses and voids, the only control being the arbitrary limit of the chosen frame. To shape figures through perspective is to give final control of form to exteriority, to space and time visualized as the structures that define existence' (p. 232). Blake does not care for this conception, and his rejection of perspective makes 'the single human form . . . the foundation of his art' (p. 233). Of course, these, and related, aspects of Blake's work have often been seen in relation to Romantic and Neoclassical primitivism, and Heppner pays due tribute, in this connection, to the work of Robert Rosenblum. But it is helpful to find a discussion which studies this topic both in the detail of the designs, and in relation to Blake's thought.

The book as a whole, however, is inconclusive: indeed, it ends with quite extraordinary abruptness. This seems only appropriate, for its real conclusion is that, with due allowance for the development from 'noun' to 'syntax', one should reach sensible conclusions about the meaning of gesture and posture while sensitively weighing the relative importance of part and whole in the interpretation of a design. This might have been embarrassing to set down as a conclusion. It is sensible enough, of course, as far as it goes; but the self-denying ordinance about learning from Blake himself is a deadly handicap in some of the particular interpretations here. Literary critics have for the most part abjured their complacent concentration on Blake's words, just as in general they have moved away from practical criticism. This is not the only book on Blake's art to evince a narrowness that still pervades art criticism, imparting to it an air of spurious rigour.

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FRANK SIBLEY: IN MEMORIAM

Colin Lyas

I

I FIRST saw Frank Sibley in September 1963, when the six new postgraduate admissions to the Sage School of Philosophy at Cornell were greeted by him as chairman of that illustrious department. I vividly recall his uncompromising message that great things were expected of us and that a failure to live up to those expectations would not be kindly viewed. I also recall him taking me aside and advising me to do some mathematical logic rather than attend his aesthetics seminar. Fortunately I was later to hear the content of that influential seminar given in lectures at Lancaster. These were the foundational memories of what, over thirty years of acquaintance, has become an overload of memories of shared experiences.

That welter distils itself into three master memories.

First, there is the memory of his courage, a virtue about which we had various discussions. In those discussions I was aware that Frank was one of that generation of philosophers who had served in war in uniform, in his case as a tank commander. This gave his thoughts on courage, and indeed war in general, a lived depth. Whatever intellectual problems he might have about courage, I have no doubt that throughout his life he memorably and movingly exhibited that virtue. He was stricken first by a cruel depression that cut the core from what should have been his most creative years. Yet during that time, day after day, year after year, at dear knows what cost, he came to the office, even on the blackest of his black days, and ran *his* department with unselfsparing application. He was then stricken by the long illness from which he was eventually to die. I can only guess what it cost him during this time to write and to talk. In all those hard times, as throughout his life, it was philosophizing that gave a meaning to his existence. His chief frustrations and impatience occurred when weaknesses of mind and body kept him from that task. The intensity of his thinking and the depth and originality of his thought never slackened. Those present at his memorial service heard his friend and former school-fellow, Professor Michael French, an engineer and himself an exemplar of humane intelligence, speak of the many conversations they had on aesthetics and philosophy in Frank's last months, and how, in their last talk, toward the very end, Frank spoke of the way he had

come to see how his life's work fitted together into a synoptic vision that would have enabled him to write the book that had long eluded him. He was a philosopher to the last.

His ability to keep his condition in perspective never failed him. The last time we met, I was off to a foreign conference and asked if he had any message for the many friends who were certain to ask after him. 'Tell them', he said with a sardonic smile, 'I suffer, therefore I exist.'

That brings me to the second master memory, which is of Frank Sibley's humour and laughter. I have never known anyone who laughed quite like Frank. Those bouts would culminate with him red in the face and quite literally wiping the tears from his eyes with a large white handkerchief, an act which in itself served to heighten whatever was already hilarious in the situation. His humour was quirky, intelligent, surrealistic and always lightning fast. Absurdity and puns absolutely delighted him. It is my regret that I have never had a chance to peruse the work he composed with his friend Paul Ziff entitled, *O Bitter Dicta*, which was a feast of word play.

Life constantly threw up absurdities. On one occasion he found himself in that rarity of rarities, a non-English speaking Swedish restaurant, where even Frank, with his astonishing gift for languages, was at a loss. He promptly discovered that Swedish prices are seriously damaging to financial health. Frank pointed to what appeared to be the cheapest item on the menu, to be greeted by much arm-waving and head-shaking. He made clear his categorical determination to have just that item. Some minutes later, to shrugs and head-tappings, a place was set for him with a tiny knife and fork, between which was set a tiny plate, on which was arranged, with the aesthetic fastidiousness for which Sweden is justly legendary, one tiny sausage, four chips and seven peas. Thus did Frank discover how to say 'children's meal' in Swedish. Out came the white handkerchief to wipe away the tears of the inevitable paroxysm of laughter.

But for most of us who knew him, our chief memory is of Frank Sibley *doing* philosophy. For him that meant above all else the face-to-face cut-and-thrust of public debate, preferably after someone had read a challenging and demanding paper. I found the sight of him in full cry simply overwhelming. There would be analyses of the meaning of words, entirely pertinent and strikingly original counter-examples and the most rigorous attention to the logic of argument, all pursued with an unflagging zeal, fluency and passion. I first saw him do this at Cornell and win the unreserved admiration of such luminaries as Black, Malcolm, Donnellan, Shoemaker, Sorabji and Sachs. They all saw what many of us have seen over the years: a very great philosophical intellect going about its business. To be on the receiving end of this was an unnerving experience. Many never understood that there was nothing personal in the onslaught, only the strictest respect for clarity and sound argument. He insisted on the same standards of rigour in his students, and those who think that students like being

talked down to or having their learning made easy ought to have seen the love and gratitude with which sometimes the most unlikely students showed their appreciation to one who let them glimpse the standards to which they could aspire.

II

Frank Sibley went up to Oxford to read modern languages and decided to read philosophy, in part because he wished to undertake work in aesthetics, a subject that was not at that time taught as such in Oxford. His starting point was one that was to inform all his work. For even as an undergraduate he was convinced that the clue to aesthetics lay in the careful investigation of what at various times he called 'praise words', 'merit and demerit terms' and 'aesthetic terms'. During 1948 and 1949 he collected vast lists of these from various sorts of literature and criticism of literature that he found in various Oxford libraries. He sorted these into types and began to explore their relationships, a task that informed his teaching in the USA in the 1950s. He also discussed this casually with Ryle who invited him to write a book on aesthetics for the Ayer Pelican series. His later comment on this invitation is entirely typical: 'I was too aware how much needed to be done and too scared of going into print.'¹ He rightly pointed out that he really could claim to be doing a certain kind of analytical aesthetics before anyone else. That bears on a claim, sometimes made, that Frank was put onto his way of doing aesthetics by Austin's often quoted remark that in aesthetics we should concentrate on terms like 'dainty' and 'dumpy'. That remark appeared in 1957, and Sibley read it first, he recalled, when Austin's collected papers appeared in 1961. But by then he had already been doing his careful investigation of a host of aesthetic terms for over ten years. Nor, as some have suggested, was he directly influenced by Wittgenstein's *Lectures and Conversations*, which appeared only in 1966.

If there was an influence on him, it was not what this or that person said in aesthetics but rather the philosophical atmosphere of post-war Oxford, the kind of atmosphere that pervades the articles eventually to appear in Flew's *Logic and Language*. He singled out George Paul, Grice, Austin and Ryle as influences on his general philosophical approach. The direct influence of Wittgenstein came later.

Given this account of the influences on his philosophical development, one can ask two questions about his philosophy. One is whether the underlying motivating conception of philosophy, imbibed from a particular atmosphere at a particular time in Oxford, is tenable; the other, granted that conception is tenable, is about the fruitfulness of his application of that method of proceeding to philosophical aesthetics.

As to the first of these questions, there is now likely to seem something quaintly *passé* about what was at varying times called 'Oxford philosophy',

'linguistic philosophy' or 'ordinary language philosophy', a *soi-disant* 'movement' that even in its heyday attracted a venom culminating in Marcuse's memorable diatribe:

The contemporary effort to reduce the scope and the truth of philosophy is tremendous, and philosophers themselves proclaim the modesty and inefficacy of philosophy. It leaves established reality untouched; it abhors transgression. Austin's contemptuous treatment of the alternatives to the common usage of words and his defamation of what we 'think up in our armchairs of an afternoon'; Wittgenstein's assurance that philosophy 'leaves everything as it is'—such statements exhibit, to my mind, academic sado-masochism, self-humiliation and self-denunciation of the intellectual whose labour does not issue in scientific, technical or like achievements.²

Many of the criticisms of the very different philosophers—Austin, Ryle, Wittgenstein, and even, saints preserve us, Ayer, who are often carelessly lumped together as if they had, like Marx and Engels, met to hammer out an agreed manifesto for a philosophical revolution—are, as I have argued in various places, simply misinformed, sometimes grotesquely and almost laughably so.³ Here I make no effort to offer anything that counts as any sort of general defence of the methods of those who, like Austin, influenced Sibley. Indeed, beyond the characterization in his inaugural lecture of philosophy as concerned with scrupulous attention to the precise meaning of terms and to the validity of arguments, he did not go in for speculations about what philosophy was up to. Indeed he once said to me that one got on with the job of analysis of argument and meaning, and if others found the results helpful, that was enough.

Yet there was one aspect of the work of the philosophers that influenced him which seems to me entirely uncontroversial and which is integral to an understanding of the distinctive form his philosophical aesthetics took. I can best approach the matter by quoting something from one of Sibley's avowed philosophical influences, J. L. Austin:

Our common stock of words embodies all the distinctions men have found worth drawing, and the connexions they have found worth making, in the life of many generations: these surely are likely to be more numerous, more sound, since they have stood up to the long test of the survival of the fittest, and more subtle, at least in all ordinary and practical matters, than any you or I are likely to think up in our armchairs of an afternoon. . . . Ordinary language has no claim to be the last word. . . . It embodies . . . the inherited experience and acumen of many generations. . . . If a distinction works well for practical purposes in ordinary life . . . then there is sure to be something in it. . . . Yet this is likely enough not to be the best way when our interests are more extensive and intellectual than the ordinary. . . . And superstition and error and fantasy of all kinds become incorporated into ordinary language. . . . Certainly, then, ordinary language is not the last word. in principle it can everywhere be supplemented and improved upon and superseded. Only remember, it is the *first* word.⁴

Here something is said that seems to me central also to Wittgenstein's thought, namely that our uses of language are not *invented* (what language would they be invented in?). Rather those uses of language have evolved, and will continue to evolve as we evolve. Because, for whatever evolutionary purpose, we have developed colour vision, so words evolved to express our grasp of the colour of things. Because we can go wrong in making claims, so ways evolve of characterizing error, or expressing doubt, hesitancy, certainty. And as we change and shape the world in different ways to our different purposes, so other uses of words will evolve, although neither I nor anyone else can forecast what we will say when, for example, brain transplants become, as I have little doubt that they will, a common event.

Although, in what Wittgenstein called 'the traffic of life', we can go wrong through solecism, slips of the tongue, linguistic ignorance, and the like, we do not have, and could not have if language is to be possible at all, any philosophical problems in talking of colour, other people, doubt and the like. We simply say things like, 'I prefer United's red shirts to their grey ones', or 'I doubt whether Newcastle will lose the title' or 'Your leg is hurting you, isn't it?'

One great controversy, which I do not go into here, is whether and how the fact that we manage, with no sense of strain, to talk to each other about people and things in the traffic of life bears on traditional philosophical problems, say, about scepticism. Whatever controversies there are, however, no one could or need deny this fact: the evolved language is immensely subtle. Since we have, for whatever reasons, evolved as creatures who feel the need, and have developed the capacities, to make fine distinctions and to talk in many different ways about nature and about the things we make and do, in, say, morality and aesthetics, so the language that we speak has evolved with us in such a way as to allow us to express those distinctions and to talk in those ways.

From this three things, which seem to me to lie at the heart of Frank Sibley's philosophy, immediately follow.

First, if we are even to *understand ourselves* as beings who are engaged with such things as art and nature in aesthetic ways, we have simply to make perspicuous to ourselves the literally infinitely varied ways in which our language allows us to express our manifold and varied dealings with these things. Attempts to reduce all this to, say, the use of the single word 'beautiful', a word itself used in a variety of ways in a variety of circumstances, may (*pace* Zangwill⁵) simply misrepresent what we are up to in aesthetics. That was why Frank Sibley composed those 'vast' lists.

Second, and perhaps deeper, is this thought: when we ask for an understanding of the arts, we may be asking for two different things, things which are too often, particularly to the detriment of the student's understanding of what philosophical aesthetics can offer, run together. On the one hand we may be asking to be inducted into appreciation of the arts. To teach at an Open University Summer School, evening classes or a university is to meet people who have been told that

the arts (by which is meant the high arts) offer a harvest that transcends the moth- and dust-corruptible rewards offered by the world of getting and spending, on the receiving end of which many of them have been. They want to get involved in these arts, and that is simply a matter of immersing oneself in them. But there is also the stage at which someone who is possessed of words with which to express appreciation, as which of us from infancy is not, is none the less unable to represent that capacity clearly to him or herself. Then the investigation becomes one into one of the forms of our life.

And then a third and central thing emerges. For we are beset by temptations to misrepresent what we have mastered when we have mastered ways of talking. One particular form that this can take is the temptation to overlook the varieties of our discourse, to take one or two cases as central and forget the others, as those who rightly thought that the surface aesthetic features of colour and shape were of aesthetic interest were tempted to make them the *only* things of aesthetic interest. Often that will be accompanied by bad arguments. A second form that the temptation takes is to run different kinds of remarks together and overlook the complexity of some of the relations between them.

Once we understand these temptations, then much that is so characteristic of Sibley's procedures, in philosophy generally, as much as in aesthetics, becomes clear.

First, if there is the temptation to overlook the complexity of our dealings with art and nature, to oversimplify, then the corrective will be reminders of how this misrepresents how it is with us. Here those 'vast lists' were the hump off which Sibley lived as he traversed the deserts of what often passes for aesthetic discussion. Time and again, we have, all of us who knew him, seen him simply offer a counter-example, remark on something that had been overlooked, to which often (as well I know) the target of his intervention could only respond with a rueful smile. He was at it to the very end. Those who look at the paper he wrote on music for Michael Krauz will see that he finds those who take as their typical example the sentence 'the music is sad', are already on the slippery slope to oversimplification of what music is and does. If his unpublished paper on ugliness sees the light of day, my readers will have the delight of reading his extraordinary list of the terms that sort with 'ugly', the mere recital of which richly enlivened his memorial service.

Second, we can understand why he thought *argument* so important. For often, he thought, a temptation to say something dubious, for example, to say, as Bell did, that photography makes representational painting obsolete, was often accompanied by bad arguments. Those arguments were sometimes simply invalid—and none had a finer nose for this than he. Sometimes, valid or not, their premises were false, simply because they falsely claimed that aesthetic terms operated in a certain way. Then they were simply open to his counter-examples. This concern with the highest standards of argument explains what many have

noticed, namely the spare rigour of his writing and thinking. I have heard some talk of his writing as somewhat cold and passionless. I simply do not understand this. What shines through, though this was best grasped when watching him in action, was the moral passion for rigour, the intolerance of cheap and sloppy thinking, and the determination to get it as right as he could. For to do philosophy at all was to owe a duty to truth.

There is a third thing. Getting it wrong has consequences. I give an example. Frank Sibley's most remembered paper is 'Aesthetic Concepts'. In that paper he makes a distinction between two kinds of comments about a thing. On the one hand there are remarks like 'it has a red patch in the left hand corner', 'There is an alliteration on line three', 'It is in $3/4$ time'. On the other hand there were comments like 'it is elegant', 'it is graceful', 'it is witty'. His central claim was that to see what was being referred to in the first set of claims was not *ipso facto* to see what was being referred to in the second set of claims, even though the properties referred to in the second set of claims were dependent on and emergent from the properties referred to in the first.

All sorts of things followed from this. One was that the debate between so-called 'particularists' (who claim that there are no general reasons in criticism) and 'generalists' (who claim that there are) might be a case of talking at cross-purposes. For depending which kind of remark one is talking about, the answer will come out differently. Thus, particularists are right that one cannot infer, because this painting is balanced by virtue of a certain patch of colour in the left-hand corner, that in general paintings with a similar patch of colour in that position will be balanced. By contrast, to say that a work is witty is generally to imply that there is something good about it, in the sense that the comment 'What ruins it is the wit' needs some special explanation. That was explored in the paper, written in the 1950s and 1960s and published only in the 1980s, 'General Criteria in Aesthetics'.⁶

But there is a more profound implication of the distinction he makes. This is explored in the unjustly neglected second part of 'Aesthetic Concepts'. For it follows from the distinction that he makes that a certain sort of procedure in aesthetics is impossible, namely the attempt to teach someone *actively* to *appreciate* a work by pointing to its non-aesthetic features and then giving a deductive or inductive *proof* that an aesthetic feature is present. Since 'it is curved' does not entail 'it is graceful', one is not going to be able to give deductive reasons for the conclusion that something is graceful. Induction fares a little better. Just as one can say 'it is by Rembrandt, so it's probably good', so one might say 'it is pale coloured, so probably it is delicate' (though why does that not equally licence 'it is insipid'?). Leaving aside the question how these inductive correlations are set up, there is another problem. The induction at best gets the learner to *believe that* a work has an aesthetic quality. But the learner wants to *see* that quality, and must do so in order to learn actively to enjoy the arts.

Whatever I think of Frank Sibley's distinction between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic, there is one thing I bless him for, and that is for giving me the wherewithal to argue that aesthetics and aesthetic education are not a matter of proving deductively or inductively that a work has this or that feature but a matter of *seeing* and *getting someone to see* something.

Probably under the influence of the success of the empirical scientists, there are those who have hoped to find something observable from which to conclude deductively or inductively that a work had merit. The early Russian Formalists were much given to this and Trotsky's judgement on them is well merited:

Having counted the adjectives, and weighed the lines, and measured the rhythms, a Formalist either stops silent with the expression of a man who does not know what to do with himself, or throws out an unexpected generalisation which contains five per cent of Formalism and ninety per cent of the most uncritical intuition.⁷

The point is more general. Students at all levels want to learn to love painting, music and literature. They are told that there is an alliteration in line 2, a key change in the 27th bar, chiaroscuro in that part of the painting. These are important things to note, but, as Sibley argued in 'Aesthetic and Non-Aesthetic', it is no good telling someone that there is an alliteration in this or that line unless one can get the student to *see* what *aesthetic* effect depends on it. Otherwise one gets that kind of pedantic trope-counting that has for too long disfigured literary education. If I can get a student to see that Picasso's *Nude Dressing Her Hair* represents a feeling of claustrophobia, then we can start seeing how that was done by such things as the placing of its elements and the colouring. But if I merely list the colours and the position of the elements, I have done nothing as yet to help appreciation. For if the distinction between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic is correct, to know all there is to know about those elements is not as yet to know anything about what interests us aesthetically.

The second part of 'Aesthetic Concepts' asks the question: 'if we can't guarantee to get someone to see aesthetic quality by induction or deduction, how do we do it?' It contains a catalogue of methods, none of which guarantees success, that could only have come from someone immersed in writing about the particular arts. For years I encouraged those who were going into aesthetic education to develop teaching methods based on this part of Sibley's work.⁸ Time and again they told me that using such methods to get students to *see* something was infinitely more rewarding than simply telling them things about the work. It was also vastly more demanding. Firstly, the teacher could not cheat by simply *learning* that a work was important and, without seeing why, pass that information along. Secondly, the teacher could not be an ultimate authority. For the student might convert the teacher to a different way of seeing something.

III

Philosophy flows in a broad stream that simply bears the weaker of us along. My test of who counts is not how much mud a person has churned up on the passage down its stream, or how much paper was generated during the passage, but the answer to the simple question 'did any of that person's work change the direction of the stream, by however little?' By that test Frank Sibley was a very considerable philosopher. This has not been as widely appreciated as it might have been because he had one notable characteristic. He simply would not rush into print.⁹ I heard ignoramuses in the university he graced by his presence remark that he hadn't written much, and he much enjoyed my comment at his farewell celebration that those fools would have thought Christ unproductive because he only published one sermon in his lifetime.

Some said that he did not publish because he was too much of a perfectionist. *He* said it was rather that he was scared and diffident. There was some truth in that, but I don't think it was the whole truth. He *was* a perfectionist and it *did* get in the way sometimes. He told me that he had read, or heard, J. L. Austin say that one should not publish until no one could disagree with anything one said. I don't know whether Austin said it, or whether Frank was being entirely serious. But I do know that he told me it on the day when Paul Ziff, a cherished friend, was visiting Lancaster. Frank gave him a paper on which he had been working and left him to read it while he went off to lecture. Later that day he said 'Paul couldn't find anything wrong with it, so I can publish it now.' Possibly what he called diffidence or being scared is just the other side of the coin from perfectionism.

I have, though, two other things to say about his productivity. First, he wrote many important papers that were for various reasons left unpublished. Thus, he showed me a paper on assertion that anticipated by some while Grice's famous paper 'Meaning'. Much that he wrote privately and lectured on publicly about fiction has since become central. The 'nachlass' is in the hands of his literary executors. Much of it is publishable and may well be published.

Second, I think in the end that publishing was a vastly less congenial activity for him than active face-to-face philosophizing. This, as it had been from the beginning of philosophy, was how it ought to be done. Discussion for him was a form of publication. Many of my readers will have seen him in these discussions and learned from him. I know of no research selectivity exercise that can ever measure that kind of productivity, but that tells me all I want to know about research selectivity exercises.

IV

I finish as I began, anecdotally. On occasions on which one talks of the departed, the temptation is to muse about what that person is thinking as he or she looks

down on us. Since Frank had logical difficulties about such possibilities, I shall not offer any such speculations. I have to report, though, that although somewhat sceptical about gods, he was not averse to annexing some of their powers. In no less a venue than a former church in Lancaster, used at that time as a university lecture theatre, he began a lecture, from the pulpit, on the philosophy of religion with the words 'Suppose I were God and said "let there be a clap of thunder"', whereupon, of course, the entire building was instantly rocked by a violent and prolonged burst of thunder. This immensely impressed his first-year audience, many of whom regularly asked him how he had done it.

Well, even if Frank cannot look down on us, we can look up to him, as ever since I first knew him I have done. Our best thanks to him will be to resist any compromise with the standards of clarity, rigour and intellectual honesty to which he gave his life. I used these words from Robert Louis Stevenson at his funeral:

Bright is the ring of words
When the right man rings them
Fair is the fall of songs
When the singer sings them
Still they are carolled and said
On wings they are carried
After the singer is dead
And the maker buried

He *was* a right man, and the bright ring of his words, and the memory of what he did for me, and for many others, by his friendship and his example will be always be a cherished part of our lives.

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NOTES

- ¹ I quote this, with the permission of his literary executors, from a note he wrote to Peter Lamarque
- ² H. Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (London: Abacus, 1972), p. 141. Other classics of the genre are Mundle's *Critique of Ordinary Language Philosophy* and Gellner's *Words and Things*. A recent addition to the genre is the odd set of remarks on ordinary language philosophy to be found in the article of that title in Honderich's *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*
- ³ 'Marcuse's Critique of "Linguistic" Philosophy', *Philosophical Investigations* (1983).
- ⁴ J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961) pp 130, 132
- ⁵ See his 'The Beautiful, The Dainty and The Dumpy', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 35 No 4 (1995).
- ⁶ In J. Fisher (ed.), *Essays on Aesthetics* (Philadelphia: Temple, 1983)
- ⁷ L. Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1957) p 172. A similar

castigation is to be found towards the end of Chapter XIV of Croce's *Estetica*.

- ⁸ I think Nick McAdoo did the same at Goldsmith's.
- ⁹ He once told me the story of how 'Aesthetic Concepts', almost over his dead body, got into print, but I'll save that for some convivial gathering

FACT, FICTION AND FEELING

Oswald Hanfling

ONE OF the many puzzles about art is the power of fictions to provoke in us emotions of the same kinds as those we experience when confronted with facts. The problem is logical and not merely psychological. Someone who says he is angry, afraid, hopeful or sad would be expected to complete his statement by reference to a suitable belief. And such statements cannot be maintained if the belief turns out to be false. Someone who feels angry about an insult cannot go on having this feeling if he learns that no such insult was in fact given. Yet, in the case of fictions, we speak of experiencing such emotions in the knowledge that the relevant 'facts'—those that are cited to complete our statements—are not really facts. We say we are sad or angry about what happened to X, knowing very well that X is a fictitious character and that what happened is not fact but fiction.

The absence of factual belief is reflected by an absence of suitable behaviour. In the normal case, a person who feels angry or afraid has suitable beliefs, and is disposed to act on them. Thus someone who feels afraid believes there is a danger and this belief entails a disposition to prevent or avoid the danger. But such behaviour is not appropriate in the case of fictions.

The problem may be presented as one of mismatch between feelings and beliefs; and this suggests two main ways of dealing with it. One is to deny that, in the case of fiction, the feelings are really the same; the other is to deny that the beliefs are really different. I shall try both approaches, beginning with the second.

ARE THE BELIEFS REALLY DIFFERENT?

It would not be right to deny flatly that our feelings about fictional characters are supported by suitable beliefs. Why do I feel afraid for Anna Karenina? Because I believe she is in trouble. Why do I feel angry with Iago? Because I saw him behave in such and such a way. As in real life, I must be able to justify my feelings for these people by reference to suitable beliefs; otherwise it would be nonsense to say I have them; and this is true of the fictional Anna just as it would be if Anna were a real person and a friend of mine. Moreover, these feelings are responsive to *changes* in what I believe or know, in the same way as in real life. If I learn that Anna's sufferings were only temporary and that a happy ending lies in store for

her, then my feelings will change accordingly; and similarly if I discover that Iago's behaviour was only a pretence which was really all for the good. The logical constraints that govern our feelings in real life are also operative in our responses to fiction.

This 'solution' would not, however, be suitable for all cases. It would not cover self-directed emotions, such as fear for oneself when watching some kinds of horror movies. In Walton's example, a monster called 'the green slime', which destroys everything in its path, appears to be advancing on the viewer, who displays symptoms of extreme fear, even though he has not forgotten that he is in the cinema and perfectly safe.¹ In this case there is no belief corresponding to those about the fictional Anna and Iago. To the question 'Why were you horrified?', the viewer need not, and probably would not, refer to a belief. He might reply that 'It seemed as if . . .', etc. but this would not be reporting a belief.

Even in the cases of Anna and Iago, however, the difference between fiction and fact cannot be set aside. The belief situations are, after all, only partly the same: the reader or viewer does not believe that anyone will really get hurt.

The difficulty would not arise if there were a 'suspension of disbelief'. In that case one would actually cease, albeit temporarily, to have the belief that the characters one is reading about or seeing on the stage are unreal, so that the belief situation would be the same in the fictional as in the corresponding real case. But, as has often been pointed out, this is not what normally happens. If it happens, it means that the work is not being experienced in the right way: there is, to use Bullough's expression, not the right 'distance' between it and the viewer or reader. This lack of distance was amusingly described by Primo Levi in his account of Soviet soldiers at a film show shortly after the War.

It seemed as if the people in the film were not shadows to them, but flesh and blood friends or enemies, near at hand. The sailor was acclaimed at every exploit. . . . The policemen and jailers were insulted with bloodthirsty cries, greeted with shouts of 'leave him alone'. . . . The audience stood up shouting, in generous defence of the innocent man; a wave of avengers moved threateningly towards the screen, but were cursed at or checked by the less heated elements or by those who wanted to see the end Stones, lumps of earth . . . flew against the screen, hurled with furious precision at the odious face of the great enemy . . . (*The Truce*, 339-440)

In this case the mismatch between feeling and belief persisted only among 'the less heated elements'; for the rest of the audience, feeling, belief and action were matched almost as well as in real life. The same is sometimes true of young children, who may believe, or half-believe, that the pantomime they are watching is reality and not fiction, and behave accordingly. But this is not the normal or proper way of responding to works of fiction.

ARE THE FEELINGS REALLY THE SAME?

Is it really fear and pity that we feel in the theatre? If so, are they the same as ordinary fear and pity? This brings us to the second way of trying to resolve the mismatch between feeling and belief.

What is not in doubt is that we feel something, and may feel it intensely. When people in the theatre or cinema get out their handkerchiefs, they are not pretending to shed tears, and neither are they pretending to have the feelings that their tears express. However, the question is not merely, as it is sometimes put, about being *moved* by what we see. To say merely that we are moved would be consistent with holding that the feelings are not the same.

One reason for questioning whether they are the same is that, in the case of fiction, negative emotions may be essential to the *enjoyment* of an experience.² Suppose I am watching a performance of *Romeo and Juliet*. During the interval I express my fervent hope that the lovers will be all right. As it happens, I am overheard by the director, who, anxious to please, offers to play out the drama in accordance with my hope. Would I accept with gratitude? In a normal case of hope what I hope will happen is what I would prefer to happen: to affirm that I hope for X, while denying that I would prefer X, would be self-contradictory. But this is not so with hope in the theatre.

It might be thought that this is simply a case of conflicting hopes: on the one hand, the hope that the lovers will be all right; on the other, that the play will not be spoiled. Walton considers 'a playgoer who finds happy endings asinine or dull'. Such a playgoer, he says, hopes that the play he is watching will end tragically. He 'wants the heroine to suffer a cruel fate', for only if she does, he thinks, will the play be worth watching ('Fearing Fictions', p. 25). But this is not so straightforward. Such a playgoer would not say he hopes for a tragic ending, or 'wants the heroine to suffer', though he might well say the opposite. But if he does say the opposite (that he hopes the heroine will not suffer), then we may question whether this feeling is really the same as in real life.

Again, consider the role of sympathy. Someone who feels sad may need sympathy, and those observing him may be moved to sympathetic feelings or expressions of sympathy or encouragement. But these needs and reactions are not appropriate in the case of fictions. If I am feeling sad in the theatre or when reading *Anna Karenina*, I do not want or expect you to express sympathy, or to assure me that things may not be as bad as they seem.³

There is a similar peculiarity about the feelings of *suspense* that we experience in the theatre or when reading. Watching *Romeo and Juliet*, I am overcome with suspense for the lovers' fate. I also know I shall feel very sad if they come to grief. Yet the chances are, at my age, that I know perfectly well what will happen. Nevertheless, what I feel is suspense. Normally we feel suspense only if an outcome is uncertain; but in the case of fiction this is not so.

Should we conclude that the feelings are *not* the same and dispose of the problem in this way? It might be thought that this is a matter for introspection. 'His realization that fictionally he is afraid is based largely on introspection, just as his realization that he is really afraid would be' (Walton, *Mimesis and Make-Believe*, pp. 246–247). Noel Carroll, in *The Philosophy of Horror*, appeals to 'phenomenology' to support his view that what we feel in the cinema is real horror. 'I, at least', he assures us, 'recall being genuinely horrified by the film' (p. 74). But such personal testimony is either unnecessary or insufficient. It is unnecessary if the point is merely that we *have* feelings, which we describe as horror, pity, fear, etc., in response to a film; and it is insufficient if the aim is to prove that these feelings are *the same* as in reality.

Consider carefully: was the pity you felt when the heroine was betrayed the same as that which you felt for your neighbour when she was betrayed? To this one person might answer 'yes' and another 'no', while a third might be puzzled by the question. The trouble is that such feelings cannot be considered in isolation from their contexts. It is not like deciding whether the headache I feel today is similar to yesterday's, or whether the sensation in my left arm is similar to that in my right arm. Such questions are easily understood, and we can reflect on our sensations as distinct from their circumstances. This may also be true of sensations *associated* with feelings of pity or horror; but not of these feelings themselves. Thus it might be true that the sensations involved in shedding tears are the same inside as outside the cinema, but it would not follow that the related *feelings of pity* are the same; and neither is this to be settled by introspection.

It is sometimes held that the difference is one of intensity, the fictional feelings being similar to, but less intense than, their real-life counterparts. But the claim that they are less intense is simply not true: one may be *more* moved by a fictional performance, especially if it is well done. [Similar objections have been made against Hume's claim that 'ideas of the memory are much more lively and strong than those of the imagination' (*Treatise*, p. 9).]

The difficulty of saying whether two such feelings are the same (or similar) is not peculiar to the case of fact versus fiction. Such words as 'fear' cover a wide range of situations, and the feelings cannot be described as 'the same' or 'similar' without reference to their circumstances. When the young Mrs Thatcher was asked how she would feel fighting an election against Mr Wilson, she replied that she would feel the same as Mr Wilson fighting an election against her. This made good sense: her claim was that the circumstances would be the same for both of them. But what if one were asked whether, say, fear of being chased by a bull is similar to fear of taking an exam or of being betrayed in love? The experience of fear is multifarious, and there is no way of comparing such feelings in isolation from their circumstances.

How are we to decide whether such feelings as fear, pity and rest in the cases of fact and fiction are the same (or sufficiently similar)? The question is similar to

one posed by Wittgenstein about mental arithmetic: 'Is calculating in the imagination in some sense less real than calculating on paper?' His reply was:

It is real—calculation-in-the-head.—Is it like calculation on paper?—I don't know whether to call it like. Is a bit of white paper with black lines on it like a human body? (PI 364)

Similarly, we might say that the fear experienced in the theatre is real fear-experienced-in-the-theatre; and that its likeness to fear outside the theatre is comparable to the 'likeness' of a paper with lines on it to a human body.⁴

What is not in doubt is that we normally *describe* our feelings in the theatre as feelings of pity, fear and the rest; and this is where the problem lies. These uses of language are too readily dismissed by Walton: 'The fact that Charles describes himself as "terrified" of the green slime proves nothing', he writes (*MMB*, p. 196). Walton's solution is to deny that Charles feels what he says he feels. He accuses his opponents of question-begging in assuming that Charles does feel this: 'Charles is afraid, it is assumed, and yet he does not think he is in danger'. Having made this assumption, the opponents conclude that 'fear does not require such a belief' (p. 200). But cannot Walton be likewise accused of question-begging? *He* assumes that fear does 'require such a belief'; and from this he concludes that what Charles feels is not fear. 'Charles does not think he is endangered by the slime. So he does not fear it.' (p. 197). Walton assumes that belief is a necessary condition and concludes from this that Charles's feeling is not fear but 'quasi-fear'; his opponent assumes that it is really fear and concludes that belief is not a necessary condition. (Perhaps, adapting Walton's expression, he will say that Charles does have a 'quasi-belief' and that this is sufficient.)

Walton's description of Charles's state is also misleading in another way. 'His muscles are tensed, he clutches his chair, his pulse quickens, his adrenalin flows'. What is lacking, according to Walton, to make this a case of fear as opposed to quasi-fear is the relevant belief. But physical conditions such as those described here are not necessary for fear and neither are they sufficient, even if belief is added. To say that I fear for the fate of Anna Karenina is not to say that I am doing or undergoing any physical actions or processes. The feeling may be mental, without any physical accompaniments of which I am aware. On the other hand, the physical conditions plus the belief would not be sufficient, for the former may happen merely to coincide with the belief. They would be relevant only if they were expressions of fear. Similarly, in the case of Charles, the physical symptoms are expressive, but not constitutive, of fear.

The outcome of the dispute between Walton and his opponent is inconclusive. Introspection cannot settle it, and neither can the point about belief. What cannot be denied, however, is that the vocabulary we use, and need to use, to describe our feelings in the cinema and when reading a novel is largely the same as that

with which we describe our feelings in real situations; and that is where the problem lies.

THE GRAMMAR OF EMOTIONS: PRESENTATION, FEELING, COMMENTING

At this stage we might simply say: 'This language-game is played.'⁵ And we might compare this game to some others that are played, such as the use of 'deep' in 'a deep well', 'a deep sound' and 'a deep sorrow', and various other examples of 'secondary sense' given by Wittgenstein and others.⁶ Following this line, we might conclude that the uses of 'fear', 'pity' and the rest in the case of fiction are derivative or secondary, the primary uses being those in which 'real' beliefs are present.

But which, after all, are the primary uses? Our first induction into the language-game of emotions is what I shall call *presentational*. A child, presented with a story, a picture-book, a film or an event in real life, is invited, by means of suitable sounds, words or gestures to respond in appropriate ways to what is presented. These responses are, or develop into, expressions of *feelings* that the child is capable of having.⁷ At this stage the distinction between fact and fiction does not intrude; the child merely follows its nature in responding suitably to what is presented. Only later can it think about facts as distinct from presentations, and only then do the ideas of true and false, fact and fiction, begin to make sense. The change is gradual: children at a pantomime who participate in the action may still be on the way to a secure grasp of these distinctions.

As concepts are extended, new ways of feeling become possible. One such way is *non-presentational*. The child is now able to have feelings about what may happen tomorrow, for example, merely on learning that it may happen and without any presentation beyond that. The concepts and feelings have been emancipated, so to speak, from their presentational roots.

Another development is the *commenting*, as opposed to the expressive, use of this language. Such words as 'pity' and 'fear' are used, as I said, to express feelings that we experience, first with, and later also without, suitable presentations. But then, later again, comes a use that is detached from the experience of feelings. In a letter saying 'I regret to inform you that the book is out of print', the word 'regret' is not there to tell me how the writer is or was feeling, but to let me know, by way of courtesy, that he is aware that I may be disappointed. Again, if I say I am angry about what the government is doing, this may mean, not that I experienced a feeling, but that I regard what they are doing as offensive. If I say I am sad about the state of education today, this is not to let my hearers know I am feeling miserable, but to give my opinion about the state of education today. Such expressions are used to comment on facts outside the speaker or writer and not to describe how he is feeling.

Now in such cases we must believe in the existence of the relevant facts—that

the book is out of print, that the government has done the thing I am angry about, etc. The use of such statements is to comment on those facts; and this presupposes that one takes them to be facts. The belief condition is therefore essential to such statements.

There are also 'mixed' cases, in which the experiential and commenting functions coexist or succeed one another. When I heard what the government is doing, it 'made me boil'. In this case my statement may serve both to report what I felt and to make a comment on the external fact. Later my feeling may subside (I no longer 'boil'), but I might still say I am angry about what they were doing. And later still the feeling may return. Whether it does so might depend on how vividly the fact enters my consciousness—on the quality of its *presentation*. To take another example, a smoker may fear the results of his habit in a purely 'commenting' sense (he knows that smoking is dangerous); but that fear may become strongly experiential when anti-smoking publicity is presented to him.

The commenting use of emotion language is a natural and convenient extension of the experiential one. 'Anger', 'sadness' and the rest are what we call the feelings we experience in certain kinds of situations, and hence these words are convenient to indicate that one takes a situation *to be* of a particular kind, even when no feelings are being experienced. Thus, when I say 'I am angry about X', I may be doing one or two things. I am certainly stating that I regard X as being a situation for which anger is appropriate, but I may also be expressing a feeling that X arouses in me.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESENTATION

I have distinguished three phases of emotion and emotion language. Corresponding to these, one might define pity, for example, in three different ways:

1. Pity is a feeling we experience when suffering is presented to us.
(Presentation and feeling are necessary, but belief is not.)
2. Pity is a feeling we experience when we believe someone is suffering.
(Feeling and belief are necessary but presentation is not.)
3. 'Pity' is the word we use when commenting on the suffering of others.
(Neither experience nor presentation are necessary; only belief remains.)

Now if we regard (3) as the *normal* case, then the language with which we describe our responses to works of fiction will seem derivative and perhaps even, as Radford has claimed, incoherent. But this is not so if we approach the matter from the point of view of the original, presentational phase, as described in (1).

The presentational phase is not *superseded* by the later, more sophisticated

phases; it remains part of the whole language-game of emotions. To illustrate this, let us consider cases other than the one at issue.

Pride is an emotion that is obviously connected with suitable beliefs. Suppose I am told I have passed an exam with distinction. This would be a suitable reason for pride, and the pride would be strictly dependent on the belief that I did well. Other cases of pride, however, are not like this: they are presentational. Attending the degree ceremony of my university may give me a feeling of pride, but must there be a suitable belief? Of course, I must believe that this is indeed my university. I must also be free of certain *negative* beliefs, such as that the university's activities are shameful or futile. But I need not have the positive beliefs that are typical for pride, such as that the university has done particularly well. (The same is true of pride in one's country or one's children, but the role of presentation may be less important here.)

It is characteristic of presentational feelings that (i) they are concurrent with the corresponding presentation, and (ii) they depend on the *quality* of that presentation. Thus (i) the pride that I felt during the ceremony did not continue after it (though sometimes there is an 'after-glow', or we take pleasure in the memory, etc.); and (ii) I might not have felt it at all if the ceremony had been less impressive. In the case of the exam, by contrast, my pride does not last only during the presentation of the news, nor does it depend on the quality of that presentation. (A typewritten slip would do just as well as a gold-lettered certificate.)

So far I have used 'presentational' in the sense of having something presented to one. But it may also be understood in the sense of being present in a particular situation; and here again the quality of the experience may be what determines one's feeling, rather than a suitable belief. This is so, for example, in cases of fear when standing on a ladder. Must such a person believe he is in danger of falling? He may know perfectly well that the ladder is safe, and his position less dangerous than when crossing the road or driving a car. The fear is, in that sense, presentational and the absence of a suitable belief does not render it unintelligible (though it might be described as irrational).

PRESENTATION IN HISTORY AND IN FICTION

Let us return to the question of fiction, approaching it by way of a factual discourse—that of history. Consider the fact that King Harold was shot in the eye at the Battle of Hastings. Does this make you feel sad or sorry? Such a remote event might even be treated as an object of humour (1066 and all that). Yet one could well be moved and deeply moved, to pity by it, given a suitable presentation, such as a vivid narrative or film. What matters, again, is the quality of presentation and not the mere telling of what happened.⁸

Again, because of the importance of presentation, we can, in the case of history

no less than in that of fiction, feel suspense about an outcome that is already known. This might be so in reading a narrative about King Harold, for example, no less than in the case of *Romeo and Juliet*, mentioned earlier.⁹

With some presentations, such as drama documentaries, it may be hard to distinguish between fact and fiction, either because of insufficient knowledge or because the distinction is inherently unclear. In such cases we may move between belief and disbelief, but with little difference in our feelings. The same is true in the case of historical novels. Reading the account of a court case in *A Passage to India*, I am moved by the predicament of the defendant. I assume the account is based on fact, but later I learn that artistic licence intervened to a considerable extent. Does this mean that if I read it again, I must be moved less or not at all? This might happen if I found the *presentation* less absorbing than before, but otherwise my feelings might be much the same as before. In such cases the presentation is what matters, and the belief condition moves into the background.

Presentational quality is connected with 'suspension of disbelief'. This idea, as I said earlier, is not acceptable if it means that, while in the theatre, we believe fictional objects to be real. The word 'suspend' does, however, express something that happens to us in the theatre or when absorbed in a novel. What is suspended in these cases is our *sense of reality* concerning the world outside the fiction. The change is experiential and not epistemic. We become absorbed in the fictional representation, our attention is occupied by it, we 'forget' the existence of the real world.

The word 'forget' has an epistemic and a non-epistemic sense. In the former, it is correlative with knowledge: if one has forgotten that *p*, one no longer knows that *p*. In this sense the spectator in the theatre has not forgotten that *p*. But 'forget' is also used in a non-epistemic, experiential sense, as when we speak of forgetting where we are, being oblivious to anything other than the play; escaping from the real world and so on.

The suspension of the sense of reality is not peculiar to our encounters with works of fiction. It is also characteristic of play of various kinds; and play, as J. Huizinga argued in *Homo Ludens*, is a pervasive feature of human life. Huizinga drew attention to the play-element in diverse activities, including war, business, ritual, the law and the arts. In the case of business, to take one example, the acquisition of money, the achievement of record sales figures and the aim of winning against one's competitors are often pursued in the spirit of a game rather than for the sake of 'real' benefits.

The playing of games involves the suspension of the sense of reality in more than one way. Children spend much time in games of make-believe in which the real world is 'forgotten'; and similar make-believe takes place in imaginary fantasies, both in adults and in children. Another kind of make-believe occurs in playing games with rules for winning and losing, such as football and Monopoly. Here an arbitrary, invented aim is treated as if it were objective—as if it 'really

mattered' whether one scored more points than one's opponent. Such games are sometimes made up on the spur of the moment—by people playing ball on a beach, for example. In all these cases our emotions are engaged in a make-believe world, one that we can enter and leave at will.¹⁰

CONCLUSION

I began by rejecting two kinds of solution of the paradox about fiction and feeling. What I have put in their place is not another solution, but a description of the wider conceptual and psychological geography, in the light of which these feelings might appear less paradoxical. My approach has been similar to that recommended by Wittgenstein with regard to a related question in aesthetics:

Don't take it as a matter of course, but as a remarkable fact, that pictures and fictitious narratives give us pleasure, occupy our minds.

('Don't take it as a matter of course'—this means: find it surprising, like other things that disturb you. Then the problematic aspect will disappear, by your accepting this fact as you accept the other.) (PI 524)

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NOTES

¹ Kendall Walton, 'Fearing Fictions', *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 75 (1978); also *Mimesis as Make-Believe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. P., 1990), section 5.2. The same example is discussed by Noël Carroll in *The Philosophy of Horror* (London: Routledge, 1990).

² '[T]he feelings of the passions are very different when excited by poetical fictions . . . A passion, which is disagreeable in real life, may afford the highest entertainment in a tragedy' (Hume, *Treatise*, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 631).

³ My treatment of this matter corresponds to Radford's 'sixth solution'. In his ingenious paper Radford rejected six 'solutions' to the problem he had set himself, 'How can we be moved by the fate of Anna Karenina?' (*Proc. Arist. Soc. Suppl.*, Vol. 49, 1975). But his rejection of the sixth is unsatisfactory. He claims that 'when, as we say, Mercutio's death moves us, it appears to do so in very much the same way as the unnecessary death of a [real] young man' (p. 76).

But what is meant here by 'very much the same way'? Radford draws attention to a number of *differences* between feelings in the real and fictional cases (similar to those I have mentioned), but he concludes that, nevertheless, 'a similarity exists' (p. 77). It appears that the feelings are, as I have argued, similar in some ways but different in others. But why, in that case, should the 'sixth solution' be rejected? The point of it is, precisely, that there are these differences. Merely to point out, as Radford does (p. 75), that we are *moved* in both cases, is not enough. We are moved in different ways by different things, and this is so in the case of fact versus fiction, as elsewhere.

⁴ Compare Berkeley's dictum that 'an idea can be like nothing but an idea' (PHK 8), and Goodman's claim, in *The Languages of Art*, that 'a Constable painting of Marlborough Castle is more like any other picture than it is like the Castle'.

⁵ See *Philosophical Investigations*, 654–655.

⁶ See O. Hanfling, "I heard a plaintive melody", in A. P. Griffiths (ed.), *The Wittgenstein Centenary Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1991). The example 'deep' is from *The Blue and Brown Books*, 137.

⁷ The process is similar to that described by Wittgenstein in connection with pain ['they teach the child a new pain-behaviour' (*PI* 244)], except that in the case of pain there is a pre-verbal phase—'the primitive, natural expression of the sensation'

⁸ The importance of presentational quality to works of fiction seems to have been denied by Aristotle. 'The plot must be so structured, even without the benefit of any visual effect, that the one who is hearing the events unroll shudders with fear and feels pity at what happens, which is what one would experience on hearing the plot of the *Oedipus*' [*Poetics*, Chap. 14, trans. G. F. Else (Michigan, 1967)] Did Aristotle think that one would be moved by a mere statement of the plot, regardless of the quality of the telling or performance? This would be a strange view

⁹ An example used by Radford was that of seeing a clip from the newreel of President Kennedy's assassination, which 'may elicit the response "Don't let him get killed!"' He used this example to make a *contrast* with the case of fiction. In the Kennedy case, he said, 'we realise that our response is silly, is incompatible with our knowledge that he is dead' ('How Can We Be Moved . . .?', p. 80). But is it silly? It is no more and no less silly than our response in the case of Romeo and Juliet or the fear that one feels when standing on a ladder that one knows to be safe. In all of these cases the emotions are presentational: what matters, what makes them normal and intelligible, is presentation and not knowledge

¹⁰ In *The Quest for Meaning* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987) I argue that the human propensity for play is important in the quest for a 'meaning of life'.

I am grateful to John Hyman and Peter Hacker for comments on earlier drafts.

ON SCORES AND WORKS OF MUSIC: INTERPRETATION AND IDENTITY

Bengt Edlund

I

ACCORDING TO a predominant view in contemporary aesthetics, a musical work is regarded as something like the class of performances that conform to a certain score.¹ This notion, it seems, complies with at least three requirements of a satisfactory ontology of works of music.² Thus, although a Beethoven manuscript would command a very high price, as a physical object it is not very interesting from a musical point of view. (It may, of course, have value for a collector, or sentimental value, and it is indispensable as a source, but unlike a van Gogh painting it has no musical value that any uncorrupted copy of it does not have as well.) Beethoven scores in general, on the other hand, are musically important because they are records of compositions and because they may give rise to performances. Further, the association of the score with its performances has the effect that the focus of interest is shifted from signs on paper to the realm of sound events. This is certainly a step in the right direction, since, ignoring certain varieties of esoteric music, an association with sound appears to be necessary.³ Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the reference to a class of performances amounts to conceding, albeit by implication, the need in music ontology to take account of interpretation. A work of music must have some musical properties, and scores, unless somehow interpreted, are devoid of such.

Nevertheless, this current idea as to the nature of musical works is deeply problematic. It seems that an unreasonably heavy burden is placed upon notation when it is used to guarantee correspondence between the score and the performances, and to secure the required identity between the performances that are to make up a certain work. It also appears that this use of notation entails some serious mistakes as to the purpose and nature of musical notation.

For fear of getting too mentalistic, or due to ambitions to exhibit an elegant and economic argumentation, the amount of interpretation (and thence of musical properties) actually allowed to enter into the interpretative process, and thus into the performances making up the work of music, is disappointingly

small. This in fact turns out to be quite a well-advised, indeed necessary, restraint, since if interpretation in the ordinary, comprehensive musical sense were allowed, the identity necessary to constitute the work (as conceived in this kind of ontology) would be endangered. But this indicates that the concept of 'identity' used in these attempts to formulate the ontology of musical works is unduly impoverished from a musical point of view. It has more to do with 'identification' than with the essence of the music involved.

The most discussed and also the most influential version of the score/performance notion of the ontology of musical works is no doubt the one advanced by Nelson Goodman. According to his account, paintings are 'autographic', and works of music, since they are recorded by means of a notational system, are 'allographic'. Further: 'In music, the work is the class of performances compliant with a character' [=score].⁴ In order to understand this properly it is necessary to recall the specific meaning that Goodman's theory gives to the terms 'score', 'notation', and 'performance'.

Within Western standard musical notation it is only the subsystems referring to pitch and duration that qualify as 'notational', i.e. it is only these inscriptions that satisfy the syntactic and semantic criteria that Goodman propounds. Only these signs have sufficient rigour and precision to define structure, and consequently 'scores' are exclusively made up of such signs. It is the inscriptions referring to pitch and duration that must necessarily and with no exception or deviation be respected in order to produce a 'performance' that exemplifies the work, and there are no 'performances' but such strictly exemplificatory ones.⁵ This implies that what a 'score' defines, and thereby distinguishes as the work in question, is a pitch/time structure.

Other inscriptions found in actual scores, for instance those that refer to dynamics, are imprecise and therefore not 'notational'. Such signs are not definitive of musical 'works' and do not belong to 'scores'; and they need not necessarily be respected to generate those 'performances' that, as a class, make up a certain work of music.

This article aims at showing that Goodman's ontology of the musical work is untenable; the role of notation in his theory is musically counterintuitive, and so are several of the consequences of his line of reasoning. It will become evident, however, that the core of my concern is that the preoccupation with notation and pitch/time structure—(seemingly) positive matters—conceals more important issues. So whereas it appears that Goodman merely accounts for a set of identity (or rather identification) conditions with respect to performances of a certain composition, I will plead for a musically comprehensive approach including those essential constitutive traits that make up musical works as the kind of things we have in our minds.⁶

II

Besides being an exaggeration, it amounts to introducing an alien principle to state that the 'primary purpose' of the 'notational' subsystems found in actual musical notation is to make 'possible recovery of score from performance' and to 'ensure identity of work from performance to performance'.⁷ It is true that standard musical notation has been used prescriptively by composers. But in order for notation to work as a key concept in defining what a work of music is, the crucial and unexceptional correspondence between score and performance must be maintained by a very strong normative authority on the part of scores and a complementary, very loyal attitude on the part of musicians, and this has not always been the case. Composers have sometimes been quite permissive, and current practice has sometimes given performers (or the musicians have given themselves) the right to deviate from the scores.

Apart from such tendencies, one must take account of the quite evident fact that not all details and aspects of compositions are equally important. Whether considered artistically or with regard to their actual pertinence for the correct exemplification/identification of a certain musical work, the exact reading of some details in scores is immaterial.⁸ The difference between absolutely vital and not so important inscriptions is not congruent with the distinction made by Goodman between 'notational' and 'non-notational' signs: whether symbols in scores are musically and ontologically vital is not dependent upon their precision of reference. Approximate dynamic marks, for instance, may very well be constitutive for a work, while certain signs exactly prescribing pitches or durational proportions are not. While Goodman for his purposes has to 'categorically require full compliance with the specifications',⁹ neither musical reflection nor musical tradition demands quite that much.

One may think that what Goodman wants to capture with his distinction is the difference between 'structural' signs, that only composers are entitled to inscribe and that musicians are obliged to observe, and 'interpretative' signs, that specify how the players are to render the structure, and that are less binding since they may be considered to be inscribed by the composer as interpreter—a difference that may appeal to those involved in practical interpretative work.¹⁰ But Goodman's distinction between 'notational' and 'non-notational' signs is not congruent with these two categories either. Musical structure must in principle be taken to include more than just the 'notational' pitch/time structure, and inexact 'non-notational' dynamic signs may thus crucially contribute to defining the compositional structure while, say, notated rhythms sometimes appear to commend transient inflections of performance.

William E. Webster has shown that not even the 'notational' systems within standard musical notation fulfil the criteria of watertight reference advanced by Goodman.¹¹ But to construct enharmonic or rhythmic dilemmas is to miss the

point—it seems that the deficiency goes deeper than such annoying shortcomings. Goodman's theory unfortunately deals with notation as a sequence of discrete marks. Though notation may look atomic, music is certainly not since it is essentially made up of relationships between sound events.

Considering piano scores—there is no need to go into niceties of intonation to make the point—this means that, contrary to what Goodman states, 'the characters for c-sharp, d-flat' are patently non-redundant though the 'same sound-events comply' with them.¹² Even worse, also the seemingly non-redundant character of, say, c(-natural) turns out to be quite ambiguous. To understand this, it is necessary to reconsider the semantic aspect of the 'notational' system referring to the pitch domain. Jointly these characters do not denote frequencies of sound events but tonal positions that build up musical relationships and *Gestalts*, patterns that are mediated from composer to musicians, and from musicians to listeners by means of deeply ingrained conceptualizations.

Thus, in a consequential notation the character C_4 is chosen for good reasons and can very seldom be exchanged for D_4 : these inscriptions do not denote the same musical entity, and what they denote cannot be abstracted from the musical context. And C as tonic is a world apart from C as leading note to D_4 . The interval E/G, for further instance, may emerge as the upper third of a C-major triad or as the lower third of an E-minor triad; it may top an A $\flat$ chord or it may be part of an ambiguous diminished seventh harmony. If this view is accepted, it becomes a matter of much less concern (for musical ontology, not for music teachers) whether the pitches actually played comply exactly with the pitch symbols or not, and whether the compliance classes intersect, violating the requirement of semantic disjointness, when intonation is free. What matters (at least within tonal music) is how the tones are apprehended as musical, phenomenal entities; whether, say, an F_4 in a C-major context is rendered so as to tonicize G and not so as to imply a fall down to F, which would be a proper thing to do for a G_4 . Correct musical spelling is replete with meanings, and it cannot be simplified without loss of or destruction of information. Turning to the subsystem of durational notation and to the domain of musical time (much ontologically undesirable intersection of compliants is obviously going on here), even on pianos the same picture emerges. Individually (i.e. when read in relation to the immediately surrounding signs) every note value represents a certain quite strictly defined durational proportion, but jointly their musical significance, as well as the diverse actual qualities of rhythmic diction in performance, stems from other sources, such as the pace of the music, the character of the motion, the metric position, and the rhythmic grouping. Considering, for instance, the sequence ♪ ♪ ♪, it makes a great difference if the eighth-note is taken for, rendered as, and heard as an afterbeat or an upbeat.

In Goodman's theory full compliance with the characters of the 'notational' subsystems of notation is necessary, otherwise 'all assurance of work-preservation

and score-preservation is lost',¹³ and 'scores' (pitch/time structures) cannot be recovered from performances. Keeping in mind that our understanding of music is not a matter of identification of atomic sound fragments but operates in terms of meaningful patterns, this view must be qualified.

The importance of musical conceptualizations and particularly the effects of categorical perception¹⁴ are understated in a notation-based view such as Goodman's. If musically literate listeners are able to write down the music correctly after hearing it—and often they can—this is not so much due to total lack of deviations from the score or to neat semantic disjointness of the signals but to the fact that the listeners are assisted by the musical context and to the fact that a number of concepts basic to notation are shared by composer, listener—and performer. Thus, even if a performance in some important respect happens to be unusual, atypical, or indeed downright wrong, a clever listener, wanting to understand the music, might still hear the music correctly. The context and the pertinent concepts will organize the situation, and the proper sequence of signs will be selected as the only possible or reasonable notation. It should be observed that it is important that the player takes part in this communication by means of shared ideas, since he or she is likely to respond to the notated configurations in certain specific ways that may supply the listeners with cues guiding their apprehension—a kind of 'categorical production'.¹⁵

It also sometimes happens that highly competent listeners, having heard impeccable performances, come up with discrepancies when writing the music down—discrepancies that are indicative not of mistakes but of genuine and meaningful structural alternatives. Thus a listener might have introduced, omitted, anticipated, or postponed a modulation, a fact that is likely to bring some non-trivial deviation in the pitch notation as compared to the original score. Generally speaking, it seems that such 'discrepancies' as regards musical perspective are rather the rule—only seldom are they gross enough to produce deviations in notation that manifestly disagree with a given pitch/time structure. After all, what any good listener hears is a phenomenal musical structure, abounding with relationships and ambiguities that notation (its 'non-notational' elements included) is not suited to express. And what else than a phenomenal structure is the composer striving to record by means of an imperfect prescriptive notation? It appears, then, that the understanding actually exhibited in successful music dictation is a rather shallow one, and that the concordance as to the pitch/time symbols may often obscure disagreements with regard to the relationships inherent in these elements when heard synthetically by musical minds, relationships that make up the core of a musical work as experienced.

Goodman has nothing to say about the characters in musical notation that refer to metre (time signatures, barlines, beams), and yet they appear to be critical for

his notion of the identity of the musical work. Their signification is in fact quite intricate.

Time signatures and barlines most often just confirm a hierarchy of accents that is inherent in the pitch/time structure when apprehended, or interpreted, by a competent person, and thus they represent inferences drawn from a musically inclusive phenomenal structure. Sometimes, however, these signs indicate a metric organization that specifies or contradicts the inherent metre, and when such cases are at hand, the notated metre is all but redundant: it has in fact a very strong, indeed absolute, normative authority. Turning to performance, the picture becomes even more complex. Sometimes metric signs do not seem to demand anything at all; sometimes they invite or urge the player to act. But it is not at all clear what to do—the nature as well as the proper degree of the compliants to these signs are (within reasonable limits) left to the musicians' discretion as long as the result sounds right. The metre may in fact be reflected in performance in several ways that can also be variously combined: as patterns of stress, onset timing, and articulation.¹⁶

Lacking definite reference with respect to the sound domain, the system of metric signs does not qualify as 'notational' in Goodman's sense, and yet these signs, evoking quite definite concepts, may stand for essential structural properties: properties that can be indicated in this way only, that must be mediated in performance, and that have to be correctly notated when recovering the score. Thus, when, for instance, the inherent metre is ambiguous, the metre must (in normal cases) be clarified according to the metric notation when the music is performed. If in such cases the metric signs are violated or neglected (perhaps by just happening to play 'over the edge' compliants), the change in musical character can be immense to the point of effecting a total change of identity. It might actually be quite difficult to recognize a potentially ambiguous passage if it is played in an alienating metric guise, and the score (taken here to include a correct metric notation) would hardly be recoverable from such a performance.

Examples 1 x/a/b (see end) make this point clear. The pitch/time structure in Example 1x is inherently ambiguous, a situation that may be clarified by two different performances corresponding to the notations in Examples 1a and 1b, in which the ambiguity is done away with by normative metric signs. 'Performance a', whatever its actual properties, complies with Example 1a, whereas 'performance b' does not—it is in fact not allowed as a performance of it—and Example 1a, the tune Bach wrote, cannot be recovered from 'performance b'. Structurally and ontologically essential properties may thus reside in inscriptions that are not 'notational', and the identity between performances as well as the possibility of recovering scores from performances may be crucially dependent on traits that are genuinely interpretational.

III

To sum up the argument thus far, Goodman construes the ontology of works of music in a way that incorporates misunderstandings of the nature of musical notation as well as musically counterintuitive lines of reasoning. But an even more serious drawback, hinted at in the introduction, is the poverty of the concept of music that is employed to connect score and performances and a concomitant neglect of the true scope of musical interpretation.¹⁷ Discussing the 'notationality' of pitch and time notation, examples have been given showing alternative musical meanings of 'the same' sign, and the possibility of recovering scores from performances has turned out to be illusory; these insights throw doubts on the belief that compliant performances are musically identical, that they are identical in a way that permits us to lump them together in a class in order to define what a musical work is. How could they be identical if scores are inherently ambiguous and if the same performance can be heard differently? This will be even more evident if for a moment we consider interpretation as the activity that musicians devote themselves to.

The very first bars from Alban Berg's Piano Sonata op. 1 (cf. Example 2, see end)¹⁸ may serve to illustrate the scope of interpretational decisions. It would appear that the musical consequences of such choices on the part of the interpreter might range from minute divergencies to crucial differences in form, all with concomitant changes in content.

A reasoned attitude to notation entails among other things judgement of passages in which signs seem to be absent. Does the extended slur preclude separate articulation of the two falling thirds in the upper voice in m. 1? Such thirds appear later in the sonata, and are then marked by articulation slurs. On the other hand, bringing out and separating these sighing thirds from each other might conceal the motivic relationship between m. 1 and the melodic shape that resumes the musical process in m. 3 (cf. y and y').

In m. 2 it is possible to project in the middle voice a poignant repeated motif featuring a dotted falling semitone. This can be done both in concurrence with and at the expense of the vanishing upper line melody actually a rhythmic augmentation of this same motif (cf. z' and z).

It is essential that the proportional exactness of durational notation does not prevent a rhythmic diction that conveys musical content. Thus the dotted rhythm of the active and yet poignant rising fanfare opening the sonata cannot be played in the same way as the dotted rhythms of the desolated inner-voice sighing motifs in m. 2 (cf. x and z').

If the interpreter so wants, he or she can apprehend the left hand rising dotted figure in m. 3, featuring perfect fifth and fourth, as a calm and resigned, literally and metaphorically transfigured, answer to the initial dissonant and distorted right hand gesture, and try to project this connection in the performance (cf. x

and x^1).¹⁹ Finally, the first three bars might either be smoothly attached to the rest of the sonata or be rendered so as to stand out in their own right. If this fragment is given a self-contained melodic declamation, and if the retard is pronounced enough to create a decisive gap in the continuity, it will emerge as an ominous introduction to the sonata, or indeed as a summarizing motto for the music to come.²⁰ Thus, depending on the choice of the performer, one might say that we are confronted with two works, distinguished by an important formal difference: there is one Berg Sonata op. 1 with introduction and one without.²¹

IV

From a musical point of view it is extremely disappointing to associate the identity of the work with the 'notational' pitch/time structure. And the problem is not just that aspects like dynamics, tempo and metre are left out of account, though they are important or indeed sometimes crucial. The awkward thing is that notation, which is devoid of musical relationships, is assigned a decisive role in the ontology of the music work; the disappointment derives from the fact that when establishing criteria of identity we are given pitch/time basics instead of musical essentials.

Goodman's strategy is understandable and effective if the main issue of musical ontology were to prevent Beethoven's Fifth Symphony from step-by-step deteriorating into *Three Blind Mice*.²² A positive, minimal set of properties to be strictly observed is then what is needed. The notated pitch/time structure serves this purpose (fairly) well, and truly exemplificatory performances can be generated in order to constitute the work, being of course what these performances necessarily must have in common, viz. the pitch/time structure that makes the performances identical.

Though sounds and performances are involved, the musical work has become ultimately identified with two aspects of its atomic graphic representation. And although required by the theory to complete the work, the class of conforming performances does not contribute anything of musical interest in Goodman's ontology; these exemplifications just supply the sound that after all is felt to be necessary. Indeed, when it comes to the decisive core of this ontology of the musical work, the optimal situation would be to have a computer that could perform the 'score' correctly and another one that could recover it, or to let a computer check whether performances actually exhibit the perfect pitch/time identity stipulated to obtain between members of the class of instantiations that defines a certain work. Interpretation in anything but the most barren sense is absent from this ontology.

But should not the ontology of the musical work be something less reductive; something more ambitious and musically illuminating? And should it not, in order not to arrive at counterintuitive conclusions, take account of musical

realities such as the fact that there is no music in the scores until they have been interpreted one way or the other, and the observation that actual performances tend not only to be different, but significantly different.²³

V

To conclude this essay the outlines of another, musically informed ontology of the musical work will be briefly sketched.

Composers produce (original) scores, and the signs in all uncorrupted scores—excepting signs that obviously and exclusively concern matters of execution—contribute towards defining or specifying a certain composition, but this specification is necessarily imperfect and incomplete in various important respects: musical relationships and functions, for instance, generally fall outside the notation.

Scores, it seems, carry the imperative to be heard. (Normally this means that they must be played, but a competent musician might just read the score and hear the music inwardly without any acoustic representation.) A given score may thus give rise to performances, and given the authority it generally has and the respect that performers generally pay towards the various prescriptions it holds, these performances will tend to resemble each other to a high degree. But since interpretation is necessarily involved, this resemblance—undermined as it will inevitably be by crucial and meaningful musical differences—does not amount to identity, nor does it suffice as a basis for a strict definition of what a musical work is.

What do the signs in scores refer to? It turns out that two levels of signification must be distinguished. As separate inscriptions they indicate sound events (acoustic or just imagined) and specify what properties these events should have. Apart from interpretative signs, this specification is clearly prescriptive and, ignoring the bewildering variety of the actual correlates in real musical renderings, also quite definite as far as pitch and durations are concerned, but less so with respect to the other aspects of the sound events. In addition, and in a less trivial, emphatically musical sense, the signs jointly refer to higher level musical relationships. This reference is not prescriptive and cannot be, since scores are fundamentally indeterminate or ambiguous in this respect, and since this kind of meaning is not explicit but implied and suggestive.²⁴ In order to understand this phenomenal musical structure, interpretation is required, just as it is for any actual performance of music worth attending.²⁵ This kind of interpretative understanding is also needed if a listener is to grasp the musical relationships that are embodied within the sound events of a performance.

It seems imperative that musical works should be musical in an emphatic sense and thus much richer in structure (and content) than they become when strict compliance to the 'notational' aspects of the score is demanded as a necessary and

sufficient condition for all performances that make up the work. When determining, or rather establishing, what a musical work is, we cannot abstain from the relationships that stem from the music as an interpreted phenomenon and that represent the core of the musical experience, and be content with just the fragmented sign-to-sound correspondences that remain when performances are reduced to the 'identity' they have in common.

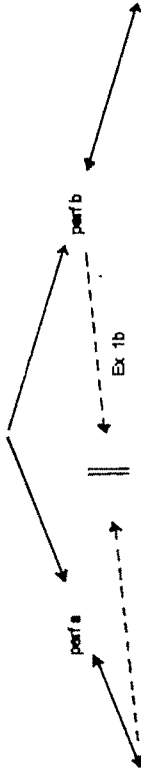
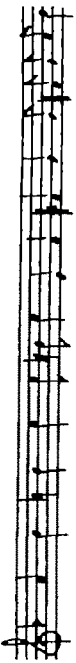
The work of music is therefore not something you establish by reduction, but something you approach through ever more comprehensive and significant syntheses based on your encounters with it in its various emanations. The two significantly different Berg sonatas op. 1 are thus no reason for ontological worry; they represent stages in the gradual discovery of this work taken in its full musical scope. In this non-reductive perspective an altogether different kind of identity emerges; what characterizes a musical work is not identity as a condition but identity as a result. An important consequence of this shift as regards the key concept of identity is that the identity of a work includes traits that derive from essential qualities that performances of the work do not have in common.

To preclude all misunderstandings it should perhaps be explicitly stated that this view does not propose sensitivity to all musically relevant features as a criterion of identity for a musical work. Defining criteria are simply not involved when speaking of a work of music as something that emerges in the beholder's mind as the essential residue of the various ways a composition has been rendered.

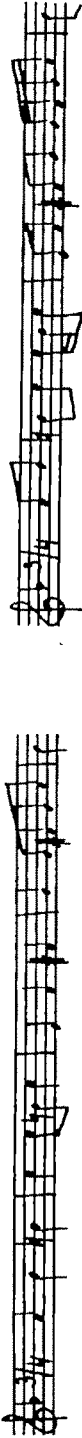
This accretion view of the ontology of the musical work also explains how we in fact manage to discriminate good performances from bad ones (or fail to do so). A good performance is one in which several or many (but certainly not all) of the potential, aesthetically important musical points have been made; in a bad performance a significant number of these crucial facets of aesthetic interest are absent or have been misrepresented. It goes without saying, and it agrees well with what we all know—that it takes much experience to tell informed interpretation from shallow playing—that our minds to some extent are cluttered up by ideas deriving from imperfect interpretations, and that people who have heard very little of the relevant music are poor judges of artistic quality in interpretation.²⁶

As is so often the case, the misconception about music analysed in this essay is rooted in our predilection for notation and in our inclination to let it stand for the real thing—Goodman in fact associates the musical work with the imperfect and incomplete written record of it. Let us instead regard the composer's imagination of the music and the listeners' (or the performer's) experience of it as the two ends of an hour-glass. The music must pass through the narrow funnel of notation, but how wrong and degrading it is to make this state of transition, this precarious passage between life and rebirth, the ground of what a musical work is.

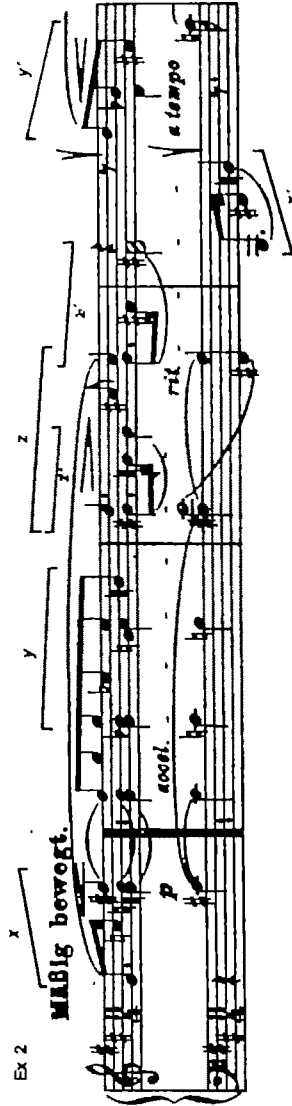
Ex 1x



Ex 1a BMV 003



Ex 2



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NOTES

- ¹ This idea is, for instance, expounded in Nelson Goodman's influential and much discussed book *Languages of Art* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968).
- ² There is much music that should not be categorized as music works, however (cf. Zofia Lissa, 'Über das Wesen des Musikwerkes', *Die Musikforschung*, Vol. 21, 1968, pp. 157-182). It would be fatal for any ontology of music to mix up, say, Beethoven sonatas, jazz jam-sessions, gamelan playing, and Eskimo songs of insult, and due to historic changes, qualifications must be introduced even within specific traditions and genres. This essay, and also generally the writings to which it refers, is concerned with instrumental art music from the last few centuries, written down in standard musical notation.
- ³ This is not to say that music is only a matter of the audible. There are residual qualities in the scores—things that can be seen but not heard. And if the performer is assigned an aesthetic status on a par with that of the listener (which seems reasonable), a host of further properties emerge that the listener knows nothing about, cf. Bengt Edlund, 'Ways of Musickmaking: Musical Ontology at Your Fingertips' (unpublished).
- ⁴ Goodman, *Languages of Art*, p. 210.
- ⁵ Jerrold Levinson avoids this truly exclusive sense of 'performance' by stipulating a distinction between exemplifications that must conform perfectly to the score and performances that may contain deviations from it and that thus represent the far more common case. As for the rest, Levinson individuates, and gives a richer identity to, musical works by taking account of various contingent facts, such as musico-historical context and medium of performance, and adding them to the pitch/time structure—an effort that is different from and yet, with respect to its general aim, consonant with the one that will be pursued here. Cf. Jerrold Levinson 'What a Musical Work Is', *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 77, 1980, pp. 5-28. For Kendall L. Walton performance mistakes give rise to bad performances—the pitch/time pattern specified by the score has been deviated from, and this necessarily harms the musical relationships that the musician wants to display. Cf. Kendall L. Walton, 'The Presentation and Portrayal of Sound Patterns', *In Theory Only*, Vol. 2, 1977, pp. 11-12, 3-16.
- ⁶ This means that two different ontological problems and two kinds of 'identity' are involved. Leaving aside the critical remarks on Goodman's ontology of the musical work (as he has chosen to deal with the problem), nothing prevents Goodman having sympathy for a more inclusive musical ontology. His mentioning of 'tempo specifications' as 'directions whose observance or nonobservance affects the quality of the work' [not just the quality of the performance] might be taken to indicate this; Goodman, *Languages of Art*, p. 185.
- ⁷ Goodman, *Languages of Art*, p. 183.
- ⁸ Indeed, though convention makes (especially) pitch and time inscriptions in scores non-negotiable regardless of why the composer wrote them down as he did, one may proceed one step further and suggest that there are passages in compositions that, notwithstanding their seemingly positive and intentional framing in the score, actually contain more than one element of arbitrariness—some traits even in masterpieces may have been decided by the tossing of a coin.
- ⁹ Goodman, *Languages of Art*, p. 187.
- ¹⁰ It appears that Goodman may have had some association between 'interpretative' and 'non-notational' signs in mind: 'tempo specifications cannot be integral parts of the defining score, but are rather auxiliary directions whose observance or nonobservance affects the quality of the work but not the identity' (Goodman, *Languages of Art*, p. 185).

While imprecise tempo indications (or exact metronome figures) are often (correctly or mistakenly) regarded as 'interpretative', it should be pointed out, however, that the effect of tempo choice may sometimes be radical to the point of altering the identity of the work. If two tempos (not necessarily very different in terms of speed) happen to suggest doubled or halved primary pulse rates, this difference in metric framework will, when projected onto the music, produce substantially different rhythmic configurations. The distinction between 'structural' and 'interpretative' signs is advanced and discussed at some length in Bengt Edlund, 'Somate, que te fais-tu?' Towards a Theory of Interpretation' (forthcoming in *Journal of Aesthetic Education*).

¹¹ William E. Webster, 'Music Is Not a "Notational System"', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 29, 1970/71, pp. 489-497 and 'A Theory of the Compositional Work of Music' *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 33, 1974/75, pp. 59-66.

¹² Goodman, *Languages of Art*, p. 181.

¹³ Goodman, *Languages of Art*, p. 187.

¹⁴ Eric F. Clarke, 'Categorical Rhythm Perception. An Ecological Perspective' in Alf Gabrielson (ed.), *Action and Perception in Rhythm and Music* (Stockholm: Royal Swedish Academy of Music, 1987), No. 55, pp. 19-33.

¹⁵ In addition to certain more or less chronometrically accurate (and possibly 'intersecting') inter-onset duration characteristics, the notation $\downarrow \cdot \downarrow \downarrow$ may release intensity and articulation properties that help to distinguish it from the notation $\downarrow \downarrow \downarrow$.

¹⁶ Cf. John Sloboda, 'The Communication of Musical Metre in Piano Performance', *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, Vol. 35A, 1983, pp. 337-396, and Bengt Edlund, 'The Tyranny of the Bar-lines. Encoding Notated Metre in Performance' in A. Friberg et al. (eds), *Proceedings of the Stockholm Music Acoustics Conference 1993* (Stockholm: Royal Swedish Academy of Music, 1994), No. 79, pp. 84-88 and 'Making Metre Evident. On the Playing of an Ambiguous Bach Melody' (forthcoming in *Musikpsychologie*).

¹⁷ 'It is, however, a fundamental tenet in our understanding of performing arts that a composition is essentially subject to interpretation', cf. Stefano Predelli, 'Against Musical Platonism', *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 35, 1995, p. 346. Or, citing Kendall L. Walton again ('The Presentation and Portrayal of Sound Patterns', p. 11), 'A performance not only presents a pattern [specified by the score], but portrays it in a certain light. It interprets, parries, organizes, the pattern in some way or other, as well as indicating what it is. And how a pattern is portrayed and interpreted, as well as what it is, is musically significant'. Walton's views are largely consonant with my own, though his idea (p. 15) of the music work as a hierarchy of Schenkerian levels portraying each other all the way up to the surface (the score) and then to the performance that in turn interprets the score seems superfluous and questionable. There are, after all, other ways of conceiving musical structure, and Schenkerian analysis is perhaps not that basic to all musically enlightening interpretation. Cf. Bengt Edlund, 'Music at the Analyst's Couch and at the Musicians Stand' (unpublished).

¹⁸ Edition Universal, Wien.

¹⁹ To let this motivic resolution emerge in the very beginning of the sonata makes sense because the work ends quite demonstratively with this dissonant fanfare motif, repeated in ever higher octave transpositions, the discord now being soothed by the third D/F# (also appearing in m. 3) heard in ever lower registers.

²⁰ For evident reasons this way of playing cannot be used when the exposition of the sonata is repeated—the gap would have no meaning, and the effect of the similar transition to the development section would be destroyed.

²¹ This somewhat drastic conclusion is provisional and will soon be adjusted.

²² Goodman, *Languages of Art*, p. 187.

²³ It seems that a musically inclusive conception of the musical work also leads to more interesting and productive further questions. For instance, when judging various renditions that are purported to be performances of a

certain musical work, the reference to full compliance with the pitch/time inscriptions in the score puts an all too swift end to the discussion. Whether, say, the sound medium chosen for performance, the arrangement of the music, or some certain traits of interpretation are disqualifying should be determined with respect to whether such characteristics are compatible with, or destroy, constitutive properties of the works 'in question—a task that productively taxes both our musical intuitions and our intellect.

²⁴ These matters are given a more thorough discussion in Bengt Edlund, 'Sonate, que te fais-je?'

²⁵ This is in agreement with the position taken by Thomas Carson Mark, cf. his essay 'Philosophy of Piano Playing. Reflections on the Concept of Performance', *Philosophy and*

Phenomenological Research, Vol. 41, 1980/81, pp. 299–324, where he gives the performance status of a second work of art, presupposing the composition and illuminating it

²⁶ It is also evident that Goodman rests content with bad interpretations when it comes to instantiation of music works; indeed, given the independence of true interpretational endeavours, good interpretations entail a substantial risk that the works fail to be exemplified

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ARTISTRY

John Armstrong

I

PAINTERS HAVE always been praised for their ability to render likenesses and for their technical accomplishments. But it is clear that, on its own, the ability to render a likeness or to have superb control over the medium and instruments of painting is not a sufficient condition for the creation of an artistically valuable picture. Of course, this point does not sanction the view that technical accomplishment is irrelevant to the creation of works of high artistic value. It is still possible that what we value in a painting, when we value it as a work of art, may be described with reference to technical accomplishment.

The opening sections of this paper are concerned with specifying what it is for a painter to exercise *artistry*. On the basis of this understanding we can then go on to enquire about the relevance of this exercise, on the part of the painter, to the artistic merit of the painting.

In what follows I try to reconstruct some important ideas which may go under the banner of 'artistry'; it is not my aim to do justice to every legitimate use of the word.

II

'Artistry' has application outside the realm of fine art. We may talk of the artistry of a batsman or of a silversmith. What are we getting at with such talk? Making a silver teapot is a skilled undertaking; certain techniques of handling the material have to be mastered. That the silversmith Paul de Lamerie possessed such skills to a high degree is evident from a teapot he made in 1735, now in the Ashmolean. It is in the nature of a skill that the application of the skill can be controlled by the master. In making this teapot, de Lamerie was particularly inventive and imaginative in the uses to which he put his skill. There is a fine balance between the decorative work on the spout, handle and lid and the restraint of the main body. The spout has an elegant double curve which has been emphasized by a linear decoration. There is a complex harmony between the form of the spout and the form of the handle; the flattening of the bowl is repeated (in an exaggerated way) in the lozenge form of the knob of the lid. And what we value

is not just that there is balance or harmony between these parts, but the particular balance or harmony which has been achieved in this piece of work.

We can easily imagine another craftsman who possessed the relevant skills to make just such a teapot but who did not have the imagination to undertake it, who would not have thought of introducing a flowing motif where the spout meets the bowl, or who would not have thought of pursuing a precise balance between the final curve of the spout and the finger-rest on the handle, although had this imaginary silversmith conceived of the pot in this way he would have been able to realize the conception. The second craftsman lacked de Lamerie's artistry, although they were equal in skill. In this sense, 'artistry' is employed to signal the imaginative use of a skill.

The notion of a skilfully realized imaginative conception is still too broad to capture what we are getting at with the term 'artistry'. Suppose a clock-maker has a brilliantly imaginative conception of a new kind of escape mechanism, which requires some very technically complex metalwork. In making such a piece, the clock-maker has skilfully realized an imaginative conception. But, the clock-maker has not exercised artistry in the sense that we are concerned with here. What is the difference between the skilful and imaginative clock-maker and de Lamerie?

The teapot is intended to be valued in respect of its function, but the skill and imagination which have gone into its making endow it not only with utility but with features for which it can be valued in addition to its utility. The imaginative exercise of skill which we are here concerned with is one which renders the object valuable from an aesthetic point of view. The clock-maker did not endow the clock with aesthetic qualities. This reference to aesthetic qualities is implicit also in the use of 'artistry' to describe the batsman's play.

Artistry, then, is to be understood as the skilful realization of an imaginative conception which endows the object with aesthetic interest.

From this account of artistry, it is apparent that artistry will come by degrees. For the terms in which it has been analysed, imagination and skill, each allow of exercise to differing degrees. And the degree of artistry exercised will be a function of the degree of imagination and skill. There is not an absolute sense in which some painter may be said simply to possess or to lack artistry.

III

Artistry has been differentiated from uninspired technical mastery, and it can also be differentiated from the exercise of imagination which is not accompanied by adequate technical facility.

We can imagine a cultivated amateur who can direct a craftsman in the making of a teapot like de Lamerie's. The amateur can suggest the pursuit of such refined features and can judge whether or not such qualities have been realized as the

work progresses. But the amateur does not himself have the skill to make a pot of this quality. This amateur does not have the artistry of de Lamerie, although the two are equals in respect of imagination.

It has sometimes been claimed that such scenarios, as that of the inspired amateur, are incoherent. 'The "means" went into the idea, which could not have been the same without them', writes Isenberg¹ — meaning that unless one possessed a particular degree of technical skill, one simply could not conceive of the imaginative project in question. But this objection is not, in general, a forceful one.

There are a variety of ways in which an imaginative project, such as that which de Lamerie undertook with respect to the teapot, can be described. Each description has a different dependence upon the material practice and each is more or less complete as a description of the imaginative project of the artist. The mere thinking about balance, which is a true but minimal description of the imaginative project, does not seem to require any connection with the material of silver. When so described, the amateur and the silversmith may be equally imaginative and inspired.

However, there is a description of the silversmith's imaginative project which is more detailed. It may involve thoughts about how a joint can be both elegant and strong. This imaginative effort requires a degree of acquaintance with the process of production. Only someone with detailed knowledge of how teapots are made could conceive of the imaginative project so described, although in this case it is still not required that the person be themselves able to realize the project.²

At a yet more detailed level of description, the silversmith's inspiration will include all the nuances of how he actually carries out the project, the recognition that the metal has to be worked in just such and such a way to achieve the required effect. At this level of description, only someone who is an accomplished silversmith can have such inspiration, or be said to be in possession of such an imaginative project. As it is more and more fully described, the silversmith's imaginative project is more and more bound up with the detail of execution.

With this proviso about the level of description of the imaginative effort, we can continue to analyse the notion of artistry as a composite of two distinct capacities: the capacity to conceive imaginatively a project and the capacity to realize the project. This analysis is not vitiated by the fact that at a highly detailed level of description the imaginative conception of the project will draw upon the experience of realizing such projects. For there are perfectly coherent imaginative conceptions of the project which do not exist at such a level of explicit detail.

IV

In order to understand further the use of the term 'artistry' in connection with painting let us look at a particular example: the *Tree Study* (Louvre), sometimes

attributed to Claude and more recently to Poussin. Someone might praise this work for the accuracy of its drawing: the artist manages to present a likeness of the tree. Now, it is perfectly possible that someone be superbly good at drawing likenesses of trees and yet never produce a work of stature. The ability to so depict does not on its own explain the artist's ability to produce fine work. In one sense, accurate depiction is an artistic sub-ability. If the painter had not been able to depict accurately, he would not have been able to produce this tree study. However, this ability (to produce an accurate depiction) on its own does not explain how he was able to produce a fine as opposed to a mediocre tree study.

Suppose, further, it is suggested that the clean handling of the material (the ink and the wash) is an ability the artist required for the production of this work. Again, this is true and again it is not true that, on its own, this explains his ability to produce a fine rather than an mediocre work.

A further ability which the artist exercises is that of balancing the demands of accuracy of depiction and gracefulness of design so that he produces a *beautiful* (or artistically valuable), accurate representation (an accurate representation which is beautiful). This ability cannot be broken into two capacities: for accuracy of depiction and for harmonious arrangement of the surface of the picture. This two-step procedure would not reliably produce the outcome, and so we must attribute to the artist another ability not reducible to the conjunction of those two, namely the ability to make a beautifully disposed, accurate drawing of a tree. For this, the ability to draw accurately is required, but not sufficient, just as the ability to design the surface is necessary, but not sufficient. Although both are necessary they are not jointly sufficient.

The feature which the picture has as a result of the successful exercise of this capacity is that of being a well-disposed, accurate depiction. This precise feature is one that can be valued intrinsically and irreplaceably. For no other feature could be accurate and well-disposed *in the same way* and not, to that extent, look the same as the work we are considering.

One central success of this picture is the way in which the marks on the paper succeed in doing more than one thing at a time. Take, for example, the marks which depict the bough on the right-hand side. Imagine the artist applying the ink and wash. The marks produced achieve a number of things at once. (i) They form a graceful pattern themselves; (ii) they cohere with the pattern of the whole; (iii) they proceed from observation, resembling the characteristic curves of a bough; (iv) they bound the right-hand side of the pictured space, effectively containing the rich variety of the central tree and its foliage, not letting the eye stray off the edge of the paper; (v) they help create a planar perspective so that the central tree seems firmly located in space at a definite distance from the represented point of view; (vi) the lines succeed in terms of colour as well as outline, and also in tone and in the density of the wash; (vii) they create the impression of sunlight beyond; (viii) the lines look as if they have been applied

easily and lightly; (ix) the lines achieve all this while not detracting from the central object depicted.

We can now be more specific about the artistry the painter has exercised. A number of concerns which are potentially conflicting have been brought into resolution, so that the work succeeds in a number of different ways simultaneously.

The draughtsman has satisfied the criteria for the exercise of artistry already elaborated in respect of the silversmith. But we can now say more about the imaginative use of skill practised by the artist. Imagination is required specifically to resolve, or make the most of, potentially conflicting concerns. An artist who has the technical skill to make an accurate drawing or an attractive pattern may not have the imagination required to achieve both of these simultaneously, and certainly not to achieve them both simultaneously to a high degree. An amateur who can suggest how such resolutions may be achieved could still lack the technical ability to produce such a drawing.

We can now draw together an account of how the exercise of artistry is related to the artistic merit³ of a work such as the *Tree Study*. In this case, the artistry that is exhibited in the work is partly constitutive of its artistic merit. The picture's exhibiting artistry comes to this: seeing it (correctly) as an intentionally produced item, we see the work (correctly) as the result of the imaginative exercise of skill, and our seeing it this way depends on the visible features of the work; we do not merely know that the picture is the result of an exercise of artistry. But seeing this, seeing various features of the work as imaginative and skilful, is (in this case) a good reason for finding the picture intrinsically valuable, and intrinsically valuable (partly) by virtue of its visual features. And this way of finding the work valuable constitutes finding it artistically valuable.

The exhibited artistry, however, does not exhaust the reasons we have for finding the picture valuable as a work of art. The value we place upon sensitivity to nature, for example, is relevant to the intrinsic value which we judge the correct experience of the work to have. Thus the exercise of artistry is only part-constitutive of the artistic merit of the study.

The exercise of artistry is relevant to the artistic merit of this work, but it does not follow from this that it is either a necessary or a sufficient condition, on its own, for artistic merit.

V

It is not always the case that a painter intends the spectator to value the work for the artistry which went into it. The possibility of a divorce between the exercise of artistry and the intention that the work is valued for the artistry which went into its making is evident in cases outside the world of painting. In laying out a garden, a gardener may skilfully realize an imaginative conception in which the

garden appears natural, and the lovely effects are intended to be regarded as happy accidents.

Raphael's portrait of Baldassare Castiglione (Louvre) has a direct and simple, straightforward quality; it looks as if it was the easiest picture to paint. And it is important to understanding the painting that we should see it as having this quality. As a matter of fact Raphael exercised great artistry in the creation of this work.⁴ It is arguable that one is not intended to value the work for the artistry. One is intended to value the simplicity of the forms, not the effort that went into achieving such a simplification.

VI

That great artistry went into the creation of the work, that it is intended to be valued in part for that artistry, that it can be so valued—all this does not entail that a work is of high artistic merit. Landseer's *Dignity and Impudence* (Tate Gallery) shows Landseer to have possessed a high degree of artistry. His work is acutely observant, the textures of the dogs' coats are skilfully rendered, the relations between the animals in terms of colour and shape are carefully controlled; while preserving a sense of the dogs as dogs he has given them a human emotional aspect. All this makes it indisputable that Landseer exercised artistry in the painting of this picture. But the work is rightly criticized for its sentimentalism. The work invites the spectator to an experience which the spectator should not place a high value upon.

One way of trying to understand what has gone wrong with the Landseer picture (i.e. understanding why the exercise of considerable artistry does not produce a work of high artistic merit) is via the claim that the subject matter upon which artistry has been expended is open to severe criticism. But this is to assert that projecting human emotions into animals is doomed from the start, from an artistic point of view. And this is not something we are entitled to assert. It is, rather, the particular way that Landseer has conceived of presenting the almost human qualities of the animals which makes the work sentimental, not the mere assertion that animals have quasi-human emotional qualities. There are pictures in which dogs are depicted as dignified or as impudent which are not sentimental pictures.

Bona fide artistry can be expended upon worthless or pernicious projects. Among the most resonant words of criticism are 'very well done; not worth doing in the first place'. One may execute a feeble or vile conception with great artistry; it remains, all the same, a feeble or vile conception, and the very beguiling quality of the artistry is lamentable, for it makes something trivial or base more attractive than it deserves to be. Skill and imagination can serve trumpery wares just as much as they can be necessary for the realization of a profound work.⁵

This point gives a way of responding to one of the established conundrums of

criticism. Some paintings were painted with repellent aims in mind, e.g. propaganda pictures which propagandize for appalling causes. Now, it is perfectly possible that such work should display a high degree of artistry (in the sense spelled out in the preceding section). We can judge the artistry in abstraction from the moral judgement about the ends to which it was put; but in evaluating the work as a whole there is no reason why we should ignore its repellent purpose. The work, taken as a whole, does not have a high intrinsic value, on the contrary it has a large negative intrinsic value.

VII

The exercise of artistry (understood as the skilful realization of an imaginative conception which endows the object with aesthetic interest) is not a sufficient condition for the creation of a work of high artistic value. Whether the exercise of artistry is necessary for the creation of a work of high artistic merit is another question. But, short of pronouncing on its necessity, we can trace ways in which the exercise of artistry is relevant to artistic merit in particular cases.

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- ¹ Arnold Isenberg, 'The Technical Factor in Art', in *Aesthetics and Theory of Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 61. It is not always precisely clear in this paper what Isenberg is arguing for. I attribute a strong claim to him, but it may be that he is only concerned to advance a weaker line such as the following. Without the *existence* of material production, artists could not have had the inspirations they have had. This is true, but not for the reasons Isenberg considers. 'Was it possible to *conceive* diffuse and subtle effects of atmosphere until painters had begun to mix their pigments with oil?' he asks. The implied answer is 'no'. But it is not clear why we should return such an answer. By contrast, it is obvious that a painter such as Claude could only imagine *painting* the diffuse and subtle effects of atmosphere because of the existence of painting. So, there *is* a way in which the imaginative project depends upon the material practice. The amateur can only imagine a perfectly balanced handle and spout because there are teapots.
- ² Someone who was once able to carry out the project, but is now no longer able to (because of, say, loss of precise motor control) is in a different situation. In conceiving of the imaginative project they draw upon their memory of being able to realize such projects.
- ³ To answer this question one would have to give an adequate account of artistic merit, and this is a task which cannot be pursued here. For the purposes of this paper I construe artistic merit as the intrinsic value of experiencing of the work, when it is correctly experienced. One feature of correctly experiencing a work such as the *Tree Study* is that one see it as irreplaceable with respect to its visual features.
- ⁴ That one is not intended to value the work for the artistry which went into its creation does not entail that one cannot be visually aware of the artistry. One *can* dwell upon how carefully Raphael has arranged the folds of the costume, how the silhouette of Castiglione's hat is made to complement many other curves in the picture.
- ⁵ In section II it was claimed that the endowing

of the object with aesthetic qualities is integral to the exercise of artistry. It may be thought that this entails that no genuine exercise of artistry could result in an object devoid of artistic merit: a conclusion which contradicts the claim made in the present section, namely that the *bona fide* exercise of artistry may produce a work of no artistic merit.

The full resolution of this difficulty requires a thorough exposition of the notion of artistic merit; it lies outside the scope of this paper to provide such an account. However, if artistic merit is construed in the following way (as I believe it should be) the apparent contradiction disappears. Artistic merit concerns the intrinsic

merit of the experience of contemplating the work, when that experience is in line with the experience the painter intended the spectator to have. It may be that the experience which the painter intended the spectator to have is a base one. (This is obviously not to claim that the painter conceived of it as base.) The beguiling aesthetic qualities of the work may only add to the corrupt character of the intended experience. In such a case, the exercise of artistry has not endowed the work with artistic merit.

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INDIVIDUAL STYLE IN PHOTOGRAPHIC ART

Nigel Warburton

ROGER SCRUTON'S controversial paper 'Photography and Representation'¹ stirred a number of writers from their dogmatic slumber. They responded with horror to Scruton's claims that photography was never representational in any aesthetically relevant sense of the term. Scruton argued that photography is not representational because it can never be intentional. What he meant by this was that photographs can never embody thoughts about the objects they represent, nor can they represent anything that does not actually exist: they are transparent² and 'fictionally incompetent'. Actually Scruton never claimed to be talking about real photographs; his theory was about *ideal* photography, by which he meant 'a logical fiction, designed merely to capture what is distinctive in the photographic relation and in our interest in it'.³ Ideal photographs are the result of an optico-chemical process, not an intentional one. This, he thought, made photography, in contrast with painting, incapable of evincing a way of seeing its subject matter: photographs are transparent, and so cannot exhibit anything but the grossest elements of style. They certainly do not merit the term 'representational', not when compared with the paradigm representational art, painting. Scruton, of course, concedes that photographs are in ordinary language *called* representational, but denies that they exhibit anything of comparable aesthetic value to what is present in figurative painting. In other words he takes seriously Oliver Wendell Holmes's characterization of the daguerrotype as a 'mirror with a memory'. Indeed he explicitly compares photographic and mirror images at a number of points in his article.

Scruton's critics have typically replied that Scruton has misrepresented what actual photography is like. *Actual* photography involves all kinds of intentional input in terms of choice of camera, film, shutter speed, aperture and so on; it also involves choices of subject matter, framing and numerous other aesthetically relevant matters. The result, they claim, is that although perhaps fictionally incompetent, photography involves so many aesthetically relevant choices that it is perverse for Scruton to maintain that photographic representation is impossible and of less aesthetic relevance than representation in painting. I call this response

the *weak response* to Scruton for reasons given below. Those who have given the weak response include R. A. Sharpe,⁴ William L. King⁵ and Robert Wicks⁶ and myself.⁷ The point of this article is to show why the weak position is weak and to present the outlines of a stronger response to Scruton's strong position.

For Scruton ideal photographs are always transparent to their objects, as he puts it:

The photograph addresses itself to our desire for knowledge of the world, knowledge of how things look or seem. The photograph is a means to the end of seeing its subject; in painting, on the other hand, the subject is the means to the end of its own representation. The photograph is transparent to its subject, and if it holds our interest it does so because it acts as a surrogate for the thing which it shows. Thus if one finds a photograph beautiful, it is because one finds something beautiful in its subject. A painting may be beautiful, on the other hand, even when it represents an ugly thing.⁸

The appropriate attitude towards a photograph is one of *curiosity*: curiosity about the subject of the photograph. We should not be interested in the photographer's intentions, because the photographer's intentions are largely irrelevant to the finished object:

With an ideal photograph it is neither necessary nor even possible that the photographer's intention should enter as a serious factor in determining how the picture is seen. It is recognised at once for what it is—not as an interpretation of reality but as a presentation of how something looked. In some sense, looking at a photograph is a substitute for looking at the thing itself.⁹

When actual photographers try to move away from this ideal of photography and achieve some kind of aesthetically relevant intentional input, Scruton accuses them of 'polluting' photography with 'painterly techniques'. Indeed he claims that

The history of the art of photography is the history of successive attempts to break the causal chain by which the photographer is imprisoned, to impose a human intention between subject and appearance, so that the subject can be both defined by that intention and seen in terms of it.¹⁰

The way in which Scruton has set up his argument leaves him vulnerable to the charge of having begged the very question that is at issue, namely whether or not photographic representation is possible. He has defined representation in terms of what occurs in painting and then declared that whenever actual photography achieves some modicum of representational significance, it has done so by borrowing the techniques of painting. However, it is fairly obvious that if you define representation purely in terms of what occurs in painting, then it is hardly surprising to find that the techniques of representation in other art forms are borrowed from painting.

The usual line of criticism, however, is to demonstrate that Scruton has a simplistic notion of what a photograph is like, and to demonstrate that real photographs involve all kinds of aesthetically significant decisions in the course of their making. For instance, we find William King drawing our attention to the fact that the photographer William Klein has, in a particular photograph, 'imposed a photographic texture, transforming the look of fabric and of human skin'.¹¹ This is supposed to show that the photographer's manner of representing the subject is relevant to a viewer's appreciation of it; in other words that photographers can and do exhibit aesthetically relevant intentions in their work. King writes 'Klein's transformation of values, but especially texture detail, is like a stylistic device, evident in the extensive body of his work focussed on urban life.'¹² Now, while this is undoubtedly true, it seems to play into Scruton's hands: Scruton never argued that photography is completely styleless, but only that photography lacks 'all except the grossest features of style'.¹³ But surely what King has described here is precisely that. King's example is typical of those used by Scruton's critics: they all seem intent on drawing our attention to relatively crude photographic techniques which can scarcely merit the status of an individual style. Numerous photographers use a grainy finish for their images, but this certainly does not constitute a style. Style involves a far more sophisticated pattern of embodied intentions than this. Scruton's article is usually taken to be dismissive of the possibility of photographic art, and this sort of critic unwittingly gives him ammunition for this position.

Certainly it would not be unreasonable to conclude from Scruton's critics that even if photographic art is a possibility, it must be hamstrung by the crudity of stylistic choices available to the photographer. One reason why Scruton's critics have ended up with these apparently lacklustre conclusions is that they have focused on style within individual images. They have uncritically accepted Scruton's assumption that if style *can* be achieved within photography it *must* be achieved here and here alone. This is one of the assumptions that I wish to challenge. Another of Scruton's assumptions which they have uncritically accepted is that if style is achievable within photography, then it must be achieved in the act of representation rather than in some other way. A result of this is that the philosophical discussion of photography, at least that focused on the debate about Scruton's article, has presented a skewed picture of what is distinctive and important in photographic art. The truth is that photographic style is only in part achieved through the manner of taking photographs. There are numerous contemporary photographers, each with their own individual photographic style, but, it must be said, very little variety among the surface qualities of photographs. Most of Scruton's critics have concentrated on the *how* rather than the *what* of photographic image making. As a result they have tended to ignore the distinctive pattern of choices of subject matter and of image that for many photographers constitute their style. The way in which many photographers achieve an

individual style in their photographic art is far more interesting than Scruton's critics allow. As I will show, the analysis of individual style in photographic art provides the material for a strong rebuttal of Scruton's implicit position on the possibility of photographic art; a far stronger response than the weak and ultimately unconvincing replies of the likes of Wicks, King and Sharpe.

First I should make clear what I mean by individual style.¹⁴ Individual style is the style of an individual: it is a distinctive pattern of human intentions (or apparent intentions) communicated through works of art and revealing an apparent underlying artistic personality. Individual style is contrasted with general style. General style is usually the style of an epoch, such as the quattrocento, or of a self-conscious movement in art, for example the cubist style in painting. Individual style is frequently recognizable within a single work in painting. We can usually recognize the distinctive style of any of Van Gogh's paintings, for example, by his patterns of brush strokes, his use of colour, his choice of subject matter and so on. Now it may of course turn out that a painting which appears to be distinctively by Van Gogh was in fact painted by a clever forger. But even if forensic evidence were needed to decide whether or not it was a genuine Van Gogh, the painting would still be *in the style* of Van Gogh, i.e. in a style distinctive of paintings done by Van Gogh himself. The style would have had to have been established in order for it to have been imitated. 'Style' in this individual sense is sometimes used to refer merely to whatever is distinctive of a particular artist's use of a medium. But a more important use of the term is to refer not just to what is distinctive but to those aspects of it that exhibit an aesthetically significant intention. Style in this sense is contrasted with mere 'signature' or the use of 'trademarks'.

As Scruton rightly points out, our interest in style in works of art is largely an interest in human intention that allows us to understand what is chosen and what is accidental:

it is style that persuades us that the question, Why this and not that? admits such fruitful exploration in the case of painting. Style enables us to answer that question by referring solely to aspects of the painting rather than to features which are aesthetically irrelevant, or in no way *manifest* in what is seen.¹⁵

Style in painting is typically achieved by control over detail. But, as Scruton argues, photographers do not have great control over the detail within their pictures; and, if they start exercising too much control over detail, they cease to be photographers, and become painters. Presumably Scruton would argue that the increased control of detail made possible by the new pixel technology and the so-called electronic darkroom are not really developments in photography, but in some other bastardized form of painting, or collage perhaps.¹⁶

Scruton's thesis that the photographer lacks intentional control over the

image-making process, and particularly over detail, echoes the writings of the photographer and theorist P. H. Emerson, who as early as 1890 published his black-bordered pamphlet *The Death of Naturalistic Photography*. In this he retracted his former view that photography could in principle achieve artistic status, now arguing that photographs could never be works of art on the grounds that the photographer's choice of interpretation of subject matter was at the very least 'cramped': 'control of the picture is possible to a slight degree . . . but the all vital powers of selection and rejection are fatally limited'.¹⁷ Emerson's conclusions were in part based on his misunderstanding of the significance of certain findings in sensimetry, and it is undoubtedly true that new photographic technology has increased the scope of the photographer's control over the medium. Nevertheless there is certainly some truth in the claim made by both Emerson and Scruton that, in comparison with painting, photography is limited in choice of manner of representation. But representation is not a necessary feature of an artistic style; many non-representational art forms allow for the possibility of individual style. Nevertheless most writers on photography seem to have assumed that the only way in which style could be achieved in photography is in the manner of representation of its subjects.¹⁸ My contention is that, while in certain cases the manner of photographic representation is important to understanding the individual style of the photographer, this is not true of the majority of cases. Faced with the relative intractability of the medium, photographic artists have found new ways of exhibiting complex patterns of human intentions through their images.

The automation in the photographic process makes it extremely difficult to tell what is due to the photographer and what simply to the uninterrupted causal optico-chemical operations of lens and camera. Consequently, when trying to understand a photograph as something more than a carrier of information about its subject matter, we characteristically need to go beyond what is visually given in the photograph. What this amounts to in the context of photographic art is at the very least looking at a series of images by the same photographer. It is only in a series of photographs that a photographer's choices can be made clear: this is an important feature of photography; because style can be achieved and demonstrated within an individual painting, there is in that art frequently less of a need to see a range of material by a particular artist in order to understand a particular work. What is more, two visually indistinguishable photographs by different photographers could have radically different meanings when inserted into their corresponding repertoires. For instance, Diane Arbus's photograph *A House on a Hill, Hollywood, Cal. 1963* is a photograph of part of a film set, a fake building, a façade held up with scaffolding. Her intentions in taking this photograph are not immediately obvious from considering it in isolation from the rest of her work. Precisely the same image within the output of a different photographer, one who was concerned simply to document Hollywood film sets,

would embody intentions about appearances of film sets and would be correctly read as a record of an appearance. However, in Arbus's case, the photograph is best seen as exemplifying some of the themes apparent in her photographic portraiture. This is the only photograph of a film set in her published output, most of her images being photographs of people. Her portraits are almost always of outsider figures—transvestites, nudists, freak show performers, or else ordinary people looking strange because of their pose or dress. A common theme visible throughout her work is the concentration on unexpected self-revelation on the part of the subject. In the context of this repertoire, Arbus's film set photograph takes on a different meaning: it is not simply a documentary image of a building façade, but rather a metaphorical interpretation of the dominant theme in the rest of her photographic output. Seen this way, the photograph alludes to appearances and to the visible mechanisms that support them. The Hollywood façade is a façade meant for the camera; similarly the expressions of many of Arbus's subjects are poses for the camera which simultaneously reveal, though often unintentionally, the psychological equivalent of the scaffolding behind.¹⁹ This is an extreme example, but it serves to demonstrate that the stylistic features of a photographer's output are best examined in a series of images rather than within a single image.

Everything I have said about photography could, making appropriate changes, also apply to painting. Even in painting, knowledge of an artist's repertoire is often the basic background necessary for an adequate appreciation of a particular work. There is, however, a difference in degree and emphasis: most works of photographic art would be completely unintelligible without some kind of contextualization within the photographer's output.

Actually, with photographic art the situation is more complex. Because, as we have seen, the nature of a photographer's repertoire conditions how any individual image is interpreted, the selection of what is to count as repertoire is itself an important intentional aspect of photographic art. Contingently photographers are capable of producing many thousands, if not millions, of images in a lifetime; however, very few of these are given the status of photographic art. Again, the same might be said of painting; however, it is just a fact about photography that it is remarkably easy to produce many thousands of images in a very short space of time. What usually happens is that a photographer implicitly dubs a selection of this output 'personal work'. This is achieved by such techniques as signing or stamping or making exhibition prints or exhibiting or perhaps including the relevant images in a photographic monograph. All these are signs that the photographer wants particular images to be considered part of a larger series. Without this sort of information about the status of particular photographs, it can be very difficult to discern the intentions behind an individual. This is in fact what often happens when, after a photographer's death, his or her estate releases numerous previously unseen images into the market

place. Such acts, while they *may* be performed from the best motives (but usually are not), can seriously distort our understanding of what a photographer was trying to do, and thus of that photographer's style. Whilst it is not usually possible to say with certainty of every image that it was deliberately chosen as part of the photographer's artistic repertoire, usually there is relatively little controversy about which are the central artistic works of a particular photographer. Nevertheless, if exhibition curators and book compilers are interested in revealing a particular photographer's style and thus their most important intentional contributions within the medium, then they have a responsibility to examine the history of what has been done to these images or prints. We can only be certain that a photographer chose an image or print as part of his or her photographic repertoire if that photographer somehow indicated this. Similar considerations apply to some other kinds of visual art, but they are not usually so important. For instance, many artists produce large numbers of drawings or paintings, not all of which they wish to be included as part of their final output. In the case of painting or drawing, artists typically destroy those images they do not wish preserved. Photographers, however, because they frequently keep all or large numbers of their negatives, are particularly vulnerable to becoming prey to their photographic executors. Also it is true that photographers tend to produce many more images in a lifetime than any other kind of visual artist, and yet their intentions within individual images are far harder to discern. This has the consequence that some kind of implicit selection becomes necessary. A further reason why photographers need to dub their personal work to make it clear that it is such, is that, in the twentieth century at least, many of them have had to work commercially as photographers in order to make a living. Yet there may not be a clear division between artistic and commercial work: Bill Brandt, for example, recycled many of his commercially produced images originally made for commissions for *Picture Post*, *Lilliput* or *Harpers Bazaar* as part of his artistic output;²⁰ Diane Arbus worked as a magazine photographer,²¹ but that did not stop her re-using some of the images made on assignment when it came to producing artistic work. To take an extreme example, Weegee worked as a passport photographer in his youth, but it would be ridiculous to consider these early Weegees as contributions to his mature photographic style.

Scruton's critics are entirely correct to take him to task for his misrepresentation of the sorts of choices that photographers make within individual images. However, this is only a small part of the story. A strong response to his strong position will have to take into account the fact that photographic artists actually create individual style through a number of techniques, predominant among which is the selection of particular photographs as part of their artistic output. And of course, selecting particular photographs involves selecting a particular subject matter. The reason why this can provide a stronger response to Scruton than the standard line is that even if we were to

concede to Scruton that photography is not primarily a representational medium, we could still demonstrate that it is a medium which has the capacity to embody important and aesthetically relevant intentions. As such there is then no ground for saying that photographs cannot be works of art simply because they are causally and mechanically produced: all that is compatible with the expression of complex intentions of a kind typically found in paradigmatic works of art. If Scruton is prepared to bite the bullet and accept all this, then his focus on photography's alleged lack of representational potential appears simply beside the point.

My account of individual style in photographic art has several implications. First of all, for the philosophy of photography: it is time to broaden out the discussion of photographic art and to include consideration of non-representational (or at least non-pictorial) aspects of photography. Secondly, for critics: although they probably realize this anyway, photographic critics can only gain meaningful understanding of individual photographic images if they are placed within a context of a photographer's output. Thirdly, for photographic curators: exhibitions that present one or two images by each photographer are likely to be unintelligible to those without a background knowledge of these photographers' repertoires. Thematically arranged exhibitions are likely to have little to do with photographic art. Furthermore, when, as frequently happens in posthumous exhibitions, previously unknown images that had been discarded by the photographer in his or her lifetime are presented, these should be clearly labelled; if the viewer cannot tell the status an image had for the artist, then they will very likely get a misleading impression of that photographic artist's style. Lastly, with regard to photographic books: provided they are dubbed by the photographer, and meet up to his or her standards of production, they can be seen as the appropriate units for assessing photographic art. What I mean by this is that, as they provide a series of images, they are far more likely to reveal a photographer's individual style and thus his or her embodied intentions, than are single images.

What I have been describing is the ways in which photographic artists create an individual style. There is no reason why they should always continue to use these techniques. There are indeed signs that the new pixel technology will allow photographers so much control over the detail of their pictures that photography will become much closer to painting in the way that it achieves individual style. However, until that time, and when we are considering the photographic output of photographers working in a chemical rather than an electronic dark room, individual style in photography must be understood in more or less the way I have described it.

NOTES

- ¹ Roger Scruton, 'Photography and Representation', in Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetic Understanding* (London: Methuen, 1983), pp. 102-126.
- ² Philosophers have, on the whole, been attracted to some version of the transparency thesis: the most influential statement of this is Kendall Walton's 'Transparent Pictures: On the Nature of Photographic Realism', *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 11 (December 1984), pp. 246-277; this view is criticized in Nigel Warburton, 'Seeing Through "Seeing Through Photographs"', *Ratio* (New Series) Vol. 1 (June 1988), pp. 62-74. For a critical overview of the debate, see Jonathan Friday's 'Transparency and the Photographic Image', *British Journal of Aesthetics* Vol. 36, No. 1 (January 1996), pp. 30-42.
- ³ Scruton, 'Photography and Representation', p. 103.
- ⁴ R. A. Sharpe, *Contemporary Aesthetics* (Brighton: Harvester, 1983).
- ⁵ William L. King, 'Scruton and Reasons for Looking at Photographs', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (1992), pp. 258-265.
- ⁶ Robert Wicks, 'Photography as a Representational Art', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (1989), pp. 1-9.
- ⁷ Nigel Warburton, 'Varieties of Photographic Representation', *History of Photography*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Autumn 1991), pp. 203-210.
- ⁸ Scruton, 'Photography and Representation', p. 114.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 111.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 118.
- ¹¹ King, 'Scruton and Reasons for Looking at Photographs', p. 263.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 263.
- ¹³ Scruton, 'Photography and Representation', p. 117.
- ¹⁴ For a convincing account of the nature of individual style in terms of the expression of the artist's implied personality, see Jenefer M. Robinson, 'Style and Personality in the Literary Work', *Philosophical Review*, Vol. 94, No. 2 (April 1985), pp. 227-247.
- ¹⁵ Scruton, 'Photography and Representation', p. 117.
- ¹⁶ For an interesting discussion of the impact of pixel technology on photo-journalism, see Fred Ritchins's *In Our own Image* (New York: Aperture, 1990).
- ¹⁷ Emerson, quoted in Nancy Newhall, *P. H. Emerson. The Fight for Photography as Fine Art* (New York: Aperture, 1975), p. 93.
- ¹⁸ Jonathan Friday appears to be an exception to this trend when he points out that 'aesthetic representation is not the only, or even the most important, source of aesthetic value' ('Transparency and the Photographic Image', p. 41). Unfortunately he takes the view that photography is not significant for its representational qualities; whereas I take it as obvious that it *can* be, but often is not.
- ¹⁹ For a discussion of Arbus's interest in the psychology of self-revelation, see Nigel Warburton, 'Diana Arbus and Erving Goffman: the Presentation of Self', *History of Photography*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Winter 1992), pp. 401-404.
- ²⁰ For further details of Brandt's output, see Nigel Warburton (ed.), *Bill Brandt: Selected Texts and Bibliography*, (Oxford: Clío Press; New York: G. K. Hall, 1993), particularly the introductory essay, 'Brandt's Pictorialism'.
- ²¹ For further details, see *Diane Arbus: Magazine Work* (New York: Aperture, 1984).

GOODMAN'S REJECTION OF RESEMBLANCE

Craig Files

I INTRODUCTION

IN *LANGUAGES of Art* Nelson Goodman swiftly dismisses the resemblance theory of representation.¹ One of the 'obvious faults' Goodman finds with the resemblance theory is the symmetric nature of resemblance: if *A* resembles *B*, then *B* also resembles *A*. Representation, however, is asymmetric: if *A* represents *B*, *B* does not represent *A*. Consider Goodman's own example. A painting represents the Duke of Wellington, the resemblance theory would have it, because the painting resembles the painting to the same degree as the painting resembles the Duke. But while the painting represents the Duke, the Duke does not represent the painting.² In this paper, I discuss Goodman's 'symmetry-asymmetry objection' with the aim of showing how Goodman's rejection of the resemblance theory is based on certain mistaken assumptions concerning both the notion of representation, and the role of resemblance in pictorial representation. I will argue that the symmetric nature of resemblance does not require us to oust the resemblance theory from an account of pictorial representation.

The present paper is directed at the traditional domain of the resemblance theory: non-mental, realist pictorial representation.³ Though made in this context, Goodman's 'symmetry-asymmetry objection' strikes at the very foundation of the resemblance theory. It is somewhat surprising, then, that it has received relatively little criticism in discussions of pictorial representation, a domain in which the resemblance theory has obvious intuitive appeal.⁴ Indeed, the influence of Goodman's objection has been wide ranging. Jerry Fodor, for example, writing on mental representation, takes the objection to show that the resemblance theory is a non-starter: 'the resemblance theory . . . is certainly wrong . . . resemblance is a symmetrical relation, and representation isn't; so resemblance can't be representation.'⁵

Goodman himself seemingly thinks that the symmetric nature of resemblance is itself enough reason to discard the resemblance theory. However, the following statement encapsulates both the correct diagnosis of the objection, and

Goodman's rejection of the resemblance theory: 'Plainly, resemblance in any degree is *no sufficient condition* for [pictorial] representation.'⁶ In fact, the above quotation is a statement I do *not* wish to dispute. However, I agree with it for reasons different from those of Goodman, and, unlike Goodman, do not see it as cause to discard the resemblance theory. I will argue that Goodman's rejection of the resemblance theory is due to a conflation of two issues: (i) the question of what conditions are required for an object to *represent* and (ii) the question of what confers representational *content*. I discuss these two issues in section II. The distinction between the two issues is reinforced by an account of representation, due to Charles Sanders Peirce, presented in section III.⁷ Section IV provides a sketch of the resemblance theory. In section V I consider Goodman's conventionalism. I argue that convention does have a role in an account of pictorial representation, though not the role attributed to it by Goodman. I offer an alternative version of conventionalism which—when coupled with the paper's earlier claims—shows that Goodman's symmetry-asymmetry considerations do not require a rejection of the resemblance theory, and that Goodman's conventionalism can be resisted. I will suggest that Goodman is, in part, pushed to his conventionalism by a consideration which can in fact give the resemblance theory a secure place in an account of pictorial representation.

II REPRESENTATIONALISM

Representationalism is the general doctrine which investigates any number of issues implicated by the attribution of representational status to objects (states, events, processes and properties). Objects to which representational status is accorded can be termed representation bearers.⁸

If representationalism is to be a successful doctrine it is required to provide an account of how representation is possible. But just what is it that is in need of explanation? There would appear to be two things. First, given that not all objects are representational entities, we would want to know how an object could *represent*—be a representation-bearer—in the first place. Second, given that an object which is a representation-bearer represents some thing (or some things, or some class of things), we would want to know how a representation-bearer could represent *what* it represents. There are, then, two questions we might ask about representation:

1. By virtue of what does a representation-bearer *represent*?
2. By virtue of what does a representation-bearer represent *what* it represents?

A successful representationalism would answer these two questions.

In order to answer question (1) we need to know what the attribution of representational status means in the first place. The answer is relatively

uncontroversial. A representation-bearer is a physical object which is *about* (directed at, stands for, refers to, points to) an object or state of affairs other than itself. Representation-bearers possess the property of 'aboutness'. The property of 'aboutness' is the most fundamental feature of representation; it is what distinguishes representational entities from non-representational entities. So, we can reformulate question (1) thus:

- 1'. By virtue of what does a representation-bearer possess the property of 'aboutness'?

We might call the theory which attempts to answer our (reformulated) first question 'a theory of the nature of representation' (or, 'a theory of representation' as I'll often say). A theory of the nature of representation says what constitutes the property of 'aboutness'; it states the conditions required to generate 'aboutness'.

Question (2) concerns the fact that a representation-bearer is always about some *specific* thing (or things, or class of things). Representation-bearers possess specific, or particular 'aboutness' (which is not the same as saying that they represent particulars⁹). The object (or objects, or state of affairs) a representation-bearer is about can be termed the representational object.¹⁰ But talk of *what* a representation-bearer is about refers to that set of features or properties of the representational object picked-out by a representation-bearer. This constitutes the representation-bearer's *content*. So, we can reformulate question (2) thus:

- 2'. By virtue of what does a representation bearer possess *content*?

We might call the component of representationalism which addresses our (reformulated) second question 'a theory of content'. A theory of content explains how content is conferred, or determined.

Though a theory of representation and a theory of content have different tasks, it should be emphasized that they do not stand, so to speak, side by side. The two theories work together, and a theory of content is a part of a theory of representation. A theory of representation, in other words, is targeted at the broad question of representational status—the property of 'aboutness'—itself, while a theory of content is an attempt to fill-in some of the details. A theory of representation is the overarching theory which includes all the more particular issues that might arise from attributing representational status. The question of content is one of these issues (and one of the most important). The question of content, then, is an issue *within* the question of representation; and a theory of content operates within a theory of the nature of representation.

Much philosophical discussion of representation tends to focus on the question of content, to the relative neglect of question (1).¹¹ Indeed, when

philosophers use the expression 'a theory of representation' they almost invariably mean a theory of content. I believe that the standard practice of employing the expression 'a theory of representation' when addressing the question of content is, at best, misleading. More seriously, the standard terminology often indicates a conflation of the issues of representation and content. It is a product, that is, of thinking that an answer to the question of content (question 2) also answers the question of representation (question 1), and it is associated with a tendency to conceive of representation as (merely) a relation between a representation-bearer and a representational object. As I have suggested, this is not the case. Believing it is the case leads philosophers such as Goodman to think that the resemblance theory must explain both representation and content when it ought to be seen as a theory of the latter only.

Subsequently I attempt to demonstrate the explanatory benefits of distinguishing the above two questions (and the roles of the corresponding theories). In particular, distinguishing the two questions allows us to support the claim that resemblance confers pictorial content. I take it that a distinction which supports something as intuitively appealing, even obvious, as the idea that resemblance confers pictorial content is ostensibly well justified. The next section attempts to reinforce the distinction between the question of representation and the question of content.

III PEIRCE'S THEORY OF THE NATURE OF REPRESENTATION

In this section I outline Charles Sanders Peirce's theory, and apply it to the distinction between the questions of representation and content. A defence of Peirce's theory is beyond the scope of the present paper; rather, I assume Peirce's analysis is viable and subsequently show (in section V) how it can be employed to help overcome the symmetry-asymmetry problem, and allow Goodman's conventionalism to be resisted. Showing what explanatory work can be done by adopting Peirce's theory is, by my lights, a reason for thinking that it is viable.¹²

The central claim of Peirce's theory of representation is that representation has a fundamentally *triadic* nature. Representation, on Peirce's view, involves three *relata*: the representation-bearer, the representational object, and the interpretant (or interpretation) in a cognitive agent (or interpreter).¹³ On this account, representation consists of a representation-bearer being about a representational object for an interpreter. Representation is constituted by these three *relata* and the relations obtaining between them.

Figure 1 shows the core of Peirce's theory.

It is the inclusion of the interpretant which distinguishes Peirce's account from the typical conception of representation as merely a dyadic relation obtaining between a representation-bearer and its representational object. On Peirce's account, something is a representation-bearer if it *operates*, or functions, as a

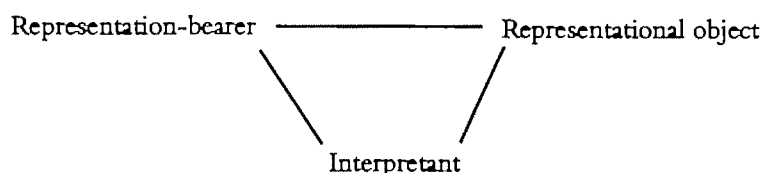


FIGURE 1. Peirce's theory of representation.

representation-bearer *for* an interpreter.¹⁴ And though Peirce himself does not characterize the issue facing representationalism in the way they were set-out in section II, we can say that, on Peirce's account: (i) a representation-bearer *represents*—possesses the property of 'aboutness'—by virtue of being (somehow) related to its representational object, by virtue of a relation between itself and an interpreter, and by virtue of an interpreter being brought into relation with a representational object; (ii) a representation-bearer represents what it represents—has the content it does—by virtue of a relation obtaining between two of these *relata*, namely the representation-bearer and its representational object. A theory of content, as suggested in section II, is embedded within a theory of representation.

Peirce characterizes the interpretant as the mental effect the representation-bearer has on the interpreter. The mental effect is a thought, or sequence of thoughts, in the mind of the interpreter. Interpreting a representation-bearer, then, consists in a thought being produced by the representation-bearer. In part, this process of interpretation amounts to *understanding* the representation-bearer.¹⁵ I will return to this point in section V.

For Peirce, it is via the interpretant that the cognitive agent is brought into relation with the representational object itself. The interpretant of a representation-bearer functions as an intermediary between the cognitive agent and the representational object itself. And, of course, thoughts are just the sorts of entities which act as intermediaries between cognitive agents and objects in the world. Thoughts are themselves about objects and states of affairs.¹⁶ So, in regard to the interpretant–representational object relation, the process of interpretation brings the cognitive agent into relation with the representational object of the representation-bearer because the thought is itself about the representational object. The thought has as its representational object the representational object of the non-mental representation-bearer. And, in regard to the representation-bearer–interpretant relation, a representation-bearer must have the power, or capacity, to produce a mental effect in an interpreter.¹⁷ What it is that gives a pictorial representation-bearer this power is an issue I will consider in section V.

Peirce seeks to unpack further the notion of the interpretant in terms of the causal powers the thought (the result of the interpretation process) itself possesses. That is, the thought causes, and interacts with, other mental states of the cognitive agent. At bottom, the interpretation process consists in a modification of the agent's behavioural dispositions. And because the interpretation process brings the agent into relation with the representational object itself—because an interpretant functions as an intermediary between the agent and the object—the modification of the agent's behavioural dispositions must be dependent on the representational object concerned. In this way, the process of interpretation means that the content of the representation-bearer so modifies the agent's behavioural dispositions that she is disposed to behave in a manner which is (in some way) appropriate to the representational object.¹⁸

We come now to a consideration of the representation-bearer—representational object relation. It is here, as suggested above, that the component of representationalism we have termed 'a theory of content' is located. A theory of content is an account of what grounds the relation between a representation-bearer and its representational object; it is an account of what underwrites a representation-bearer's content. Theories of content differ in regard to the account they give of the nature of this relation. Peirce identified three possible kinds of grounding relation: iconic, indexical and conventional.¹⁹ I briefly discuss conventionalism in sections IV and V. An indexical grounding relation is, in more familiar terms, a causal theory of content, currently influential as an account of mental content.²⁰ An iconic grounding relation is, in our terms, a resemblance theory of content, the topic of the next section.

IV RESEMBLANCE

The resemblance theory states that a representation-bearer has the content it does by virtue of the resemblance (or similarity, or likeness) it bears to its representational object. 'Resemblance' should be understood as a sharing of properties. *X* resembles *Y* if *X* has some properties in common with *Y*; the greater the number of shared properties, the more closely *X* resembles *Y*.²¹

The resemblance theory of pictorial content adverts, obviously enough, to a sharing of *appearance* properties, or what Crispin Sartwell has recently termed 'visually discernible' properties.²² Furthermore, the resemblance theory should be characterized as advertent to those visually discernible properties which belong to a picture's representational substrate. The representational substrate of a representation-bearer is to be distinguished from its material substrate. 'Material substrate' refers to all the physical properties possessed by a representation-bearer. The representation substrate is a sub-set of the material substrate. It consists of those properties which are representationally significant; those properties, that is, which are interpreted as being about an object or state of

affairs.²³ Of course, a philosophically satisfying resemblance theory would specify the representationally significant properties of pictures (spatial arrangement, proportionality of parts and colour properties would appear to be likely candidates).²⁴ Developing such a theory is not my task here. For the remainder of this section I wish to consider what a resemblance theorist would say about how we recognize what pictures represent.

We easily recognize the objects depicted in pictures, according to the resemblance theorist, because a visual experience produced by a pictorial representation-bearer has many of the properties of a visual experience of the representational object itself.²⁵ Visual experiences of the representational object itself and visual experiences of the representational object as depicted have properties in common because the picture and the representational object itself have properties in common. A picture of a certain object reflects light in a very similar way to the way the object itself reflects light. Pictures and their representational objects have certain surface, or reflectance, properties in common. Pictorial representation-bearers represent their representational objects by virtue of their *intrinsic* properties. Only by such a sharing of intrinsic properties—the resemblance theorist argues—could a pictorial representation-bearer produce a visual experience with many of the properties of a visual experience of the representational object itself.

The illustrative contrast is, of course, with linguiform (or symbolic) representation-bearers. Words, everyone agrees,²⁶ do not represent their representational objects by virtue of resemblance, but by convention. There is nothing intrinsic to the pattern of ink marks forming, for example, 'dog' (or the acoustic properties of an utterance 'dog') by means of which it represents a dog or the class of dogs.

Because pictorial representation-bearers represent their representational objects by virtue of a sharing of intrinsic properties, resemblance, as Goodman claims, is indeed symmetric. That the symmetric nature of resemblance does not render it unsuitable as an explanation of content is the argument of the following section.

V. REPRESENTATION, CONVENTIONALISM AND THE SYMMETRY-ASYMMETRY OBJECTION

Why does Goodman claim that resemblance is not sufficient for (pictorial) representation? The reason is that resemblance exists without representation. All the cars coming off an assembly line, he observes, resemble one another very closely, but none is a representation of any of the others. The Duke of Wellington resembles, but does not represent, his portrait.²⁷ Goodman's symmetry-*asymmetry* objection is a case of *resemblance without representation*.

Goodman is quite right to point out that resemblance can occur without representation, but the step from this observation to the claim that resemblance is

insufficient for representation is itself grounded in a conflation of representation and content. The conflation is revealed in Goodman's characterization of the resemblance view as representation occurring 'if and only if' resemblance obtains. And in the list of 'faults', Goodman straightforwardly lines up resemblance against representation. Resemblance is treated as offering a complete account of how representation is possible; it is expected to provide the conditions required for representational status.²⁸

Having conflated representation and content (representation and resemblance), Goodman cannot but conclude, in light of cases of resemblance without representation, that 'resemblance . . . is no sufficient condition for representation'.²⁹ The problem, as Goodman sees it, is that two entities can resemble one another in non-representational, as well as representational, events; and as there is nothing in the nature of *resemblance itself* to distinguish these two sorts of case, we should reject the resemblance theory. As suggested, however, Goodman arrives at the (correct) claim that resemblance is insufficient for representation via the wrong route. Once on this route—once the conflation of representation and resemblance is in place—it is inevitable that he arrive at the rejection of the resemblance theory. An appreciation of the real reason why resemblance is insufficient for representation shows that dismissing the resemblance theory is a mistake.

According to the theory of the nature of representation offered in section III, resemblance is insufficient for (pictorial) representation because resemblance is merely an account of the nature of the grounding relation obtaining between a (pictorial) representation-bearer and a representational object, not an account of what constitutes sufficient conditions for representational status. An account of what it is by virtue of which a representation-bearer has the content it does cannot itself say what makes certain resemblances (for example) content-conferring resemblances. Goodman's criticism of the resemblance theory in this regard therefore constitutes an illegitimate demand. It is the theory of representation which distinguishes content-conferring resemblances from non-content-conferring ones by supplying the conditions required for representational status. One of these conditions is the notion of an interpretation. Goodman leaves the interpretation out of the analysis, construing representation as a relation between a representation-bearer and a representational object. (Actually, he leaves it out in his discussion of the resemblance theory, but, as we shall see, smuggles it in when he presents his conventionalism.) Representation, as the discussion of section III suggested, is a triadic relation. Resemblance is a dyadic relation. *This* is why resemblance is insufficient for (pictorial) representation. And the slide from this statement to the rejection of the resemblance theory can be resisted once it is recognized that we must distinguish the tasks of a theory of content and a theory of representation, and maintain that the former is to be embedded within a triadic version of the latter.³⁰

If we apply Peirce's analysis to the example Goodman uses to illustrate the symmetry-asymmetry objection, we can say that the painting of the Duke produces (or has the power to produce) an interpretant which brings the cognitive agent into relation with the representational object, namely the Duke. The Duke, on the other hand, does not generate an interpretant, and so does not bring the cognitive agent into relation with the object to which he is related by resemblance, namely the painting. The painting represents by virtue of being taken by cognitive agents as being about something; the painting, but not the Duke, *functions* as a representation-bearer for cognitive agents.

However, this is not enough to dispose of the symmetry-asymmetry objection. Peirce's theory might tell us what conditions must be satisfied in order for an object to represent, but it does not say *why* certain objects are interpreted as being about other entities. Why are certain objects taken to function as representation-bearers?

The answer is surely not likely to be controversial. Pictures—and not people, for example—function as representation-bearers because it is a *convention* that pictures represent things while people—Dukes, for example—do not represent pictures. In short, it is here that conventionalism enters the story. We know that pictures are objects which are created in order to operate as representation-bearers. This (relatively high-level) knowledge is not innate. We have to learn (even if the task is not a particularly difficult one and is accomplished quite early in life) that certain objects have the function of representing other object. We have to understand the concept of representation—in the sense that certain objects are intended to be about other objects—in order to interpret certain artefacts as representation-bearers.³¹

Here we might distinguish between two ways in which artefacts can be imbued with the function of representing. First, certain artefacts (such as pictures, doorbells, models, maps and dials) are created, or designed, for the express purpose of functioning as representation-bearers. It is a further question as to how these artefacts have their content determined. Resemblance, causal relations, convention, or some combination of these, are possibilities. Second, artefacts which are not designed to serve as representation-bearers can be given the function of representing. For example, I may use plates and cups to represent Australian cricketers in order to illustrate a field setting employed in a recent Test Match against the West Indies. Stipulating representational status relies on cognitive agents understanding and agreeing to the operation of a rule which says that certain entities are to operate (at least for a time) as representation-bearers. In this second sort of case, artefacts can possess content only by virtue of convention.

The reason, then, why do not take certain entities to function as representation-bearers is because we know that they are not entities which, as a matter of convention, serve as representation-bearers. Either we know that they

are not items which have been designed to function as representation-bearers, or we know that representational status has not been stipulated. Cars, to return to one of Goodman's examples, are not created in order to be about anything. The Duke of Wellington, as David Pole has quipped, was 'doubtless a fine figure of a man. But no one would literally assert that he was made to be looked at.'³²

It is important to distinguish the position developed here from that adopted by Goodman. Goodman's conventionalism is of course, a doctrine concerning representational *content*. It states that we have to understand the conventional representational scheme (the mapping from representation-bearers to their representational objects) in order to know what a representation-bearer represents. I'm suggesting that convention governs the interpretation of certain artefacts—including pictures—*qua representation bearers*.³³

Earlier, in our discussion of Peirce's theory, we saw that the process of interpreting a representation-bearer was, in part, a matter of understanding the representation-bearer. I can now say that this amounts to understanding that the object functions as a representation-bearer.³⁴

This alternative form of conventionalism achieves what Goodman claims resemblance must, but cannot, do: demarcate representational entities from non-representation entities; or, more precisely, distinguish content-conferring resemblances from non-content-conferring ones. Goodman, because he conflates representation and content, believes that introducing a conventional, and thereby interpretative, component shows that pictorial content is not a matter of natural resemblance. However, on the proposal developed here, convention is located in the task of a theory of representation. It is the theory of representation which tells us why a painting—and not the Duke—produces an interpretant. Convention, incorporated into the task of the theory of representation, governs the process of taking certain entities as having the function of being about other things. The resemblance theory of content governs what, specifically, the interpretant will be; what the interpretant is itself about. Once we recognize that the tasks of a theory of content and a theory of representation are to be distinguished, and that convention resides in the latter, it can be seen that the symmetric nature of resemblance does not render the resemblance theory unsuitable as an explanation of pictorial content.

There is, then, something correct about the positive strand of Goodman's discussion of pictorial representation; something correct, that is, about his conventionalism. Conventional representational systems (languages and other symbol systems, on everyone's story, pictures also, according to Goodman) require a process of interpretation in a cognitive agent—a process of understanding the representational scheme being employed—in order to work. In order, that is, for content to be accessed from the representation-bearers of the representational system, and for the representation-bearers thereby to operate as representation-bearers for a cognitive agent. What is correct about Goodman's

conventionalism is the implicit recognition that a complete account of how representation is possible—for any system (or style) of representation, including pictorial representation—needs to invoke (at some stage) the notion of a process of interpretation. Goodman's conventionalism implicitly fulfils this need by building-in the interpretation process to its story about content. I have claimed, though, that Goodman's conventionalism is, in regard to pictorial representation, misplaced. There is another way of fulfilling the need to invoke the interpretation process: embed one's non-conventional theory of content within a theory of representation which, like Peirce's account, includes an interpretative component. Conventionalism in regard to pictorial content can thereby be avoided. It is in this way, as I claimed in section I, that the consideration which, in part and perhaps covertly, motivates Goodman's conventionalism is the consideration which can in fact give the resemblance theory a secure place in an account of pictorial representation. It is open to a resemblance theorist to argue that because vision is an innate capacity of organisms such as ourselves, and because visual processing is not dependent on our higher-level theoretical knowledge of both the world and our conventions, pictorial content is a matter of natural resemblance, not theoretical knowledge of a conventional representational scheme.³⁵

According to Goodman's conventionalism, interpreting a pictorial representation-bearer is a matter of understanding the convention governing what it represents. The specific interpretant produced—the specific representational object (or objects) the thought is about—is determined by convention. According to the view developed in this paper, interpreting a pictorial representation-bearer is a matter of understanding the convention governing an object's functioning as a pictorial representation-bearer. The specific interpretant produced is determined by resemblance.

VI. CONCLUSION

I have argued that Goodman is led to reject the resemblance theory because he conflates the questions of representation and content. When we examine Goodman's discussion of the resemblance theory together with his presentation of conventionalism, we do find an unwitting separation of the two questions.³⁶ However, in Goodman's case, the separation is not a virtue. Goodman vacillates between two conceptions of what is to be explained. The resemblance theory is subjected to one conception, and conventionalism to the other. Resemblance is expected—illegitimately, so I have argued—to supply the conditions for something being a pictorial representation-bearer; to answer, that is, the question of representation. And, as we have seen, Goodman rejects the resemblance theory on the grounds that resemblance exists without representation. However, once Goodman presents his conventionalism, the explanandum has changed to the

relation between a picture and its representational object; to, that is, the question of content. Goodman demands of the resemblance theory something different, something *more*, than is expected of conventionalism.

I have claimed, following Peirce, that representation is essentially triadic. It involves not just a relation between a representation-bearer and a representational object, but also an interpretation in a cognitive agent. Part of the attraction of Goodman's conventionalism lies in the fact that it contains the notion of an interpretation. I have argued, however, that by adopting the triadic theory of representation, conventionalism in regard to pictorial content can be resisted.³⁷ With Goodman's conventionalism, we have a case of too much theory in the content and not enough in the theory of representation. For pictures, it is representation that is the convention.

I don't pretend to have addressed all the problems facing the resemblance theory, and there are a number. In examining the mistaken assumptions underlying Goodman's rejection of the resemblance theory, I have attempted to show that the symmetric nature of resemblance is not one of them. The resemblance theory of content is indeed peculiar. But rather than seeing the symmetric nature of resemblance as a problem, we should recognize that it is a large part of what makes pictures so useful.

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NOTES

¹ Nelson Goodman, *Languages Of Art* (London: Oxford U. P., 1969), pp. 3-5; hereafter cited as Goodman (1969)

² Ibid., pp. 3-4. Goodman uses 'representation' to refer to pictorial representation only. I use 'representation' to refer to all forms of representation (linguiform, pictorial, etc.).

³ I will be concerned with how pictures represent, not their artistic worth. 'Realist' will be used in the pre-theoretical sense. It is an open question as to exactly what constitutes pictorial realism. For a recent discussion see Crispin Sartwell, 'What Pictorial Realism Is', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (1994), pp. 2-12.

⁴ The symmetry-asymmetry objection is briefly discussed by David Blinder, 'In Defense of Pictorial Mimesis', *Journal of Aesthetics and*

Criticism, Vol. 45, No. 1 (1986), pp. 19-27; Daniel Gilman, 'A New Perspective on Pictorial Representation', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 70, No. 2, (1972), pp. 174-186; and David Pole, 'Goodman and the "Naive" View of Representation', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 14 (1974), pp. 68-80. All three authors cited attempt to find fault with the objection. However, Blinder and Gilman argue that resemblance is *not* symmetric, a position I regard as itself mistaken, given any reasonable characterization of resemblance (see section IV of the present paper). Pole's response is close to an element of my own, though his treatment is very brief.

⁵ Jerry Fodor, *A Theory of Content and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Bradford/M. I. T. Press, 1990), Chap. 2 ('Semantics, Wisconsin Style'),

- p. 33. Reprinted from *Synthese*, Vol. 59 (1984), pp. 231–250.
- ⁶ Goodman (1969), p. 4, my emphasis. Indeed, all the 'obvious faults' Goodman finds with the resemblance theory are examples of cases where resemblance is not a sufficient condition for representation.
- ⁷ References to Peirce's work will be to C. Hartshorne, P. Weiss and A. Burks (eds), *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. P., 1931–1958). Peirce's views on representation are scattered throughout his work. I will refer to specific passages by volume number and paragraph number.
- ⁸ I owe the term 'representation-bearer' to Barbara Von Eckardt, *What is Cognitive Science?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Bradford/M. I. T. Press, 1993), p. 146.
- ⁹ Of course, representation-bearers often represent particulars. However, I will be glossing over the distinction between the representation of particulars and the representation of classes. How pictorial representation copes with this distinction is an issue requiring separate discussion.
- ¹⁰ 'Representational object' is also borrowed from Von Eckardt, *What is Cognitive Science?*, p. 146. Following Peirce, we can distinguish between the 'representational object itself' (Peirce termed it the 'Dynamical Object'), and the 'representational object as represented by a representation bearer' (the 'Immediate Object') Peirce, in Hartshorne et al., *Collected Papers*, 4.536. I'll sometimes just speak of the 'representational object' when referring to the 'representational object itself'. At other times it will be important to distinguish between the two. The precise ontological status of the 'representational object as represented' is an issue requiring closer examination.
- ¹¹ As we will see in the next section, one way of construing the question of content is to ask about the nature of the relation obtaining between a representation-bearer and a representational object. In the realm of mental representation, however, the question is not always seen in this way. One currently influential theory of mental content—Daniel Dennett's neobehaviourist account—denies that there is any objective relation holding between mental representational states and their representational object. See *The Intentional Stance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Bradford/M. I. T. Press, 1987).
- ¹² I show how the distinction between the issue of representation and content—suggested by Peirce's theory of representation—has further explanatory value in regard to the problem of mental misrepresentation in my 'Misrepresentation and Content Determination' (paper in preparation).
- ¹³ Peirce, in Hartshorne et al., *Collected Papers*, 2.228.
- ¹⁴ Daniel Dennett has said things about representation which suggest something akin to Peirce's view. See 'Artificial Intelligence as Philosophy and Psychology', in *Brainstorms* (Cambridge, Mass.: M. I. T. Press, 1978), pp. 121–122.
- ¹⁵ Peirce, in Hartshorne et al., *Collected Papers*, 2.228, 4.536, 5.287.
- ¹⁶ Peirce, in common with many contemporary philosophers of mind, held that thoughts are representational states. *Ibid.*, 5.283, 6.338.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, op. cit., 1.542.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.476. Von Eckardt, *What is Cognitive Science?*, pp. 283–284. Because the interpretant of a non-mental representation-bearer is a mental representation-bearer, itself requiring interpretation, we need—to avoid a regress—to characterize the interpretant in a way which does not implicate further representation-bearers. The notion of 'behavioural dispositions' is a way of fulfilling this need.
- ¹⁹ Peirce, in Hartshorne et al., *Collected Papers*, 4.531. Iconic: 1.558, 2.247, 2.255, 2.282, 3.556. Indexical: 2.243, 2.304, 5.73. Conventional: 2.249, 4.431.
- ²⁰ Fred Dretske, *Knowledge and the Flow of Information* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981) and *Explaining Behaviour. Reasons in a World of Causes* (Cambridge, Mass.: Bradford/M. I. T. Press, 1988), Jerry Fodor, *Psychosemantics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Bradford/M. I. T. Press, 1987), and *A Theory of Content*.
- ²¹ A sophisticated resemblance theory awaits development. And there are notorious diffi-

culties associated with developing such a theory I am, for example, leaving aside the question of how many properties must be shared for a legitimate ascription (or recognition) of resemblance, and the question of how fine-grained these shared properties must be.

- ²² Sartwell, 'What Pictorial Realism Is', p. 8. As a number of writers have pointed out, the resemblance between a picture and its representational object is one of visual appearance. This would seem obvious enough, but the specification is necessary in order to avoid Goodman's complaint that any two paintings resemble one another more closely than any paintings and its representational object (1969, p. 5). Often the particular set of properties we are adverting to is clear, because of the context of the resemblance claim. On the standard reply to Goodman's complaint, see, for example, Gilman, 'A New perspective', Pole, 'Goodman and the "Naïve" View of Representation', and Sartwell, 'What Pictorial Realism Is'.

- ²³ I owe the terms 'representational substrate' and 'material substrate' to Gerard O'Brien. I should also point out that Sartwell, 'What Pictorial Realism Is', pp. 7-8, is alive to the fact that pictures possess visually discernible properties which are not 'contentful'.

- ²⁴ As Karen Neander, 'Pictorial Representation: A Matter of Resemblance', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 27, No. 3, (1987), pp. 213-226, has pointed out, the difficulty with developing such a theory may largely rest in the absence of universal respects upon which the resemblance between different modes of pictorial representation and representational objects holds (pp. 214-216).

- ²⁵ Actually, as stated so far, this account of how we recognize the objects represented by pictures need not be the exclusive preserve of resemblance theorists. See Flint Schier, *Deeper Into Pictures* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1987), pp. 186-188.

- ²⁶ Except Wittgenstein in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1921/1974), trans. D. F. Pears.

- ²⁷ Goodman (1969), p. 4.

- ²⁸ Ibid.

- ²⁹ Ibid.

- ³⁰ It is worth pointing out that were Goodman's line of reasoning correct, the causal theory of content would likewise be in trouble. Causal relations, like resemblance relations, exist without being content-conferring. For a response to this difficulty see Fodor, *A Theory of Content*, pp. 90-93.

- ³¹ Neander, 'Pictorial Representation', pp. 218-219, cites studies suggesting that apes and young children often respond to objects depicted in pictures as if they were the objects themselves. An account of pictorial representation which claims that representation is conventional, and content determined by resemblance, is consistent with these findings, given that visual perceptual capacities develop prior to the development of the sort of higher-level cognitive abilities required to understand the concept of representation. Such an account also suggests an explanation of (admittedly unreliable) reports that certain African tribespeople fail to recognize objects familiar to them in photographs. One possibility is that the tribespeople, perhaps unfamiliar with photographic representation, are not interpreting the photographs as representations.

- ³² Pole, 'Goodman and the "Naïve" View of Representation', p. 70.

- ³³ Goodman himself (1969), p. 34, comes very close to saying something like this in his criticism of the illusion theory of pictorial realism.

- ³⁴ Incidentally, convention is not part of the story concerning how mental representation-bearers function as representation-bearers for cognitive agents possessing them. Rather, it is the role the representation-bearers play in the agent's cognitive economy I discuss this further in my 'Misrepresentation and Content Determination'.

- ³⁵ For the claim that visual processing is isolated from cognitive 'modules' carrying theoretical knowledge, see Jerry Fodor, 'Observation Reconsidered', *Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 51 (1984), pp. 23-43. For arguments against the conventionalist theory of pictorial perception, see Gilman, 'A New Perspective', and Daniel

Gilman, 'Pictures in Cognition', *Erkenntnis*,
Vol. 41 (1994), pp. 87-102

³⁶ Goodman (1969), pp. 3-5.

³⁷ Goodman (1969), pp. 7-10, is, of course, also
led to his conventionalism concerning pictorial
content because of his conventionalist theory

of perception. But this is another issue. See the
authors cited in note 35.

I would like to thank Gerard O'Brien for
comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF MEDIUM-GRADE ART

Aaron Ridley

I WANT to make two claims here, both indirectly: first, that certain philosophical questions are better asked in the context of medium-grade works of art than of stunning masterpieces; and second, that this distinction, when put to work, is capable of reconciling some of the orthodoxies of aesthetics with what, when aestheticians are at home, they know perfectly well to be true of much of their ordinary engagement with the arts.

CANONS AND PARADIGMS

I begin by noting a temptation. Suppose one wants to say something general about art, and that one feels constrained to indicate first what one means by the term. Suppose, too, that one is (understandably) disinclined to offer a formal definition. The tempting route is to offer instead a list of works that everyone will agree count as art, however that concept is defined. The ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, *King Lear*, *War and Peace*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, *Tristan*, *Paradise Lost*—these are the kinds of work that it is tempting to mention. The point, obviously, is to reassure the reader that one is not using the word 'art' in any non-standard sense, and nothing, it would seem, could serve this purpose so cleanly as a list of canonical works, of undoubted masterpieces. If what the writer has to say is true of *them*, the reader is coaxed into feeling, then lesser works, if they differ, can be left to look after themselves.

But there is something fishy going on here none the less—a fishiness that lurks precisely in the canonical nature of the works listed. For a masterpiece, after all, is something extraordinary, atypical, unprecedented. And a list of extraordinary, atypical, unprecedented (but undoubted) members of a class would seem to be an odd starting point for a generalization either about the class itself or about its members. In selecting from the canon one sets up a tension between the nature of one's project (to generalize) and the extraordinary nature of one's paradigms.

It might be that this is unavoidable, so strange is the class concerned. Artworks are just like that, someone might say—atypical, extraordinary, unprecedented. So you might as well pick the most extraordinary examples you can think of, since

those are really, in a sense, the most typical of all. There is certainly *some* point in saying this, but it doesn't get rid of the fishiness. For even if we can agree that every work of art is in a sense unique, and, if of interest, then of interest partly in virtue of the ways in which it differs from other works of art, this is far from saying that every work of art is atypical, or extraordinary, or in any non-trivial sense unprecedented. And so it is far from saying that a list including works such as *Tristan* or *King Lear* is representative of the class 'art'. The selection of canonical paradigms may—in the end, and for some purposes—obscure more about the class than it reveals. And the temptation I am talking about, although succumbed to most blatantly in the listing of canonical works, may also and perhaps more commonly go unresisted in subtler ways.¹ For example, someone might reject a particular claim because it is untrue of the very finest works of art. But that doesn't mean that the claim won't hold for the kind of art that most of us actually experience most often (F. R. Leavis, and no one else, occurs to me as an exception to this generalization). In other words, a claim that misses what matters about a masterpiece may well be entirely convincing when made of a work of medium-grade art. The following discussion (of an explicably neglected topic, I think) should illustrate the point.

AESTHETIC PREDICTIONS

Aesthetic predictions—predictions of what we will or won't find aesthetically satisfying—are not much talked about by philosophers of art.² The thought that one might know in advance whether a work of art is going to be worth experiencing seems heretical or philistine, to be part of an 'I know what I like and I like what I know' mentality. But why should this be?

I

The main reason, I'm sure, can be captured in another slogan: you can't tell whether you like it until you've tried it. And this thought, supported by a cluster of claims that are the common currency of traditional aesthetics, seems almost a truism. To like a thing is, *inter alia*, to like the experience of it, and so to know that one likes it is, *inter alia*, to know what the experience of it is like—i.e. to have experienced it. Hence you cannot predict what you will or will not like in advance. But it isn't really a truism. I've never had a leg sawn off without anaesthetic, yet I am as sure as I am of anything that I wouldn't like it. Nor have I ever won the lottery, but I know I'd like it if I did. So the case against prediction, at least in non-aesthetic contexts, is hardly made out. But there do seem to be reasons for thinking that 'You can't tell until you've tried it' expresses a truism in aesthetic contexts, for there is a clear sense in which, aesthetically, the experience counts for everything. One can say nothing, for example, about the harmonious

composition of Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, or the mellow majesty of the Nimrod variation, or the larger-than-life characterization in *The Idiot* without experiencing them. Knowledge by description counts for very little here.³ Indeed it is a hallmark of responsible criticism that it more or less explicitly demands that its descriptions be compared with the direct data of acquaintance. Merely knowing that Lyonel Feininger's *Church of the Minorites* contains glowing zones of colour is one thing; knowing their glow is another. It is in the latter sense—the sense of knowledge by acquaintance—that one knows Feininger's art, if one does. Baumgarten defined aesthetics as the science of *sensory* cognition. The senses, perceptual experiences, are central to an engagement with music and the visual arts; and their linguistic analogue is central to an engagement with literature. When Diana Raffman argues in a recent book that our capacity for perceptual discrimination outstrips our capacity to remember what we have discriminated, she underlines precisely the primacy in aesthetics of acquaintance over description.⁴ Above all, the success of a work of art is to be assessed in experiential terms—of what it is like to be exposed to it. No one doubts that almost identical descriptions could be offered of two works of radically different value (e.g. of Goethe's *Elective Affinities* and of Hermann Hesse's *Rosshalde*). But their value does not reside, or not primarily, in the descriptions that can truly be given of them. Their value lies in what it's like to read them. So if beauty is in the eye of the beholder, it does seem reasonable to require that the beholder at least behold.

A neglect of this requirement is revealingly illustrated in a recent paper by Kendall Walton.⁵ Setting out to investigate the relation between aesthetic value and moral value, Walton asks us to imagine a work of art which pictures a mixed-race couple, arm-in-arm, under the title *Shame!* But obviously nothing can be gained from such an exercise. Is the picture worth thinking about? How can Walton tell us? Yet if it isn't worth thinking about, or if the question whether it is or it isn't is unanswerable, nothing at all swings on the painting's moral qualities. Art invites, demands and justifies our attention by virtue of the aesthetic rewards it can offer. Thus we need to know whether the properties to which our attention is being drawn are the properties of aesthetically successful artworks. The possession of certain qualities—for instance apparently negative moral ones—by failed or wretched works of art can be of little interest unless those properties can also be discovered in art that is worth bothering about; and *a fortiori* the hypothesized possession of those properties by imaginary works of art can tell us nothing. Had Walton asked us to imagine an *aesthetically successful* painting with the qualities he outlines, the emptiness of his manoeuvre would have been manifest. For until or unless someone produces a work with those qualities which is an aesthetic success, we can have no way of knowing whether such a thing is possible.

These reflections serve to underline the intimate and even indissoluble connections between art and acquaintance, and between the attribution of value

to art and direct aesthetic experience. And it is in consequence of this that the suggestion that one might be able to tell in advance whether or not one *will* like a work of art seems jarring or heretical. A mere description of a work, it seems one ought to hold, can never be sufficient to ground any kind of judgement about it in advance of an actual aesthetic encounter. Thus it is that both Hume and Kant—in their discussions of the paradox or antinomy of taste—insist on the impossibility of giving rules for making aesthetic judgements; for if one could do that, then one could, by the same token, deduce from an accurate description of a work of art whether or not it was any good; and it seems that one can't do that. According to this line of thought, then, anyone who claims to know in advance what art they'll like has made a fundamental mistake about the nature of aesthetic judgement: for it seems that one is in a position to say nothing until one has had the appropriate experiences.

This or something like it, I take it, explains fairly satisfactorily why most philosophers of art would feel uneasy at the thought of aesthetic prediction. But lurking behind the uneasiness is surely something else—the tendency, mentioned at the outset, to regard canonical works as paradigmatic. For it is precisely in the case of unprecedented works of art that the primacy of experience over description is most decisive, and hence that the idea of prediction seems least applicable. Masterpieces are, by definition, unforeseeable; so to indulge in aesthetic prediction is to indulge in something quite foreign to that class of objects. I'll call this the 'canonical' objection to prediction. But it is also true that most works of art are not masterpieces, that they are not the objects of unprecedented experiences. And it is also true that a well-informed person can be reasonably confident, when faced with the prospect of an unfamiliar work, that it won't be a masterpiece either—for statistical reasons, if for no others. Thus to operate on the assumption that canonical works are somehow typical is, in effect, to substitute the question 'Is this going to be a stunning masterpiece?', to which everyone would agree that no sensible answer can be given in advance, for the much more modest question 'Am I likely to enjoy this?' The latter question is not only often worth asking, it is also worth reflecting upon.

II

For we do, as a matter of fact, make aesthetic predictions all the time; and it is hard to see how we could get by without them. Here's a passage from Howard Jacobson which has exactly the generalizing, and hence predictive, character that I mean. Jacobson's persona here is Barney Fugleman, protagonist of his novel *Peeping Tom*:⁶

I had a dislike for the English rural tradition. I didn't care for novels set primarily in the outside, on moors or under greenwood trees, especially if the outside they were set in was somehow also metaphorical, that's to say was really the inside of something

else. My other pet dislike was for works that consisted of people asking Whether There Was Anyone Who Could Tell Them Who They Were. I was terribly intolerant of identity crises. Novels in which characters asked Whether There Was Anyone Who Could Tell Them Who They Were while standing in the outside that was really the inside were, naturally, anathema to me.

The tense here, I suppose, might suggest that Barney Fugleman only objects to novels fitting that description which he has already read. But it would be surprising if he were to embark enthusiastically, or with a minimally open mind, or even at all, upon any new novel which was also reliably reported to fit the description. His generalization is implicitly predictive.

I'm sure that we all have such pet dislikes, and benefit from having them too. They're enormously useful for avoiding boredom and irritation. I was once invited to see a play described as 'experimental', 'improvisatory', 'full of weird costumes' and as offering 'plenty' of scope for 'audience participation'. With every clause I privately invented another excuse for not going; and when I heard that the whole thing was meant to be a 'protest against patriarchy and privilege' I would have been prepared to emigrate rather than find myself free on the night in question. According to the canonical position, of course, my response to what was, after all, only a description, was entirely philistine. I ought to have experienced the play before making a judgement about it. But I just *know* I can't bear that sort of thing. I am convinced, on the basis of previous exposure to experimental and extemporized theatre, that the odds against anything fitting that description yielding me aesthetic pleasure are so long as to be overwhelming. Similarly with any contemporary novel reported to be funny by Peter Ackroyd, or with any film thought innovative and exciting by an Italian. We all regulate our aesthetic lives to some degree in accordance with our pet dislikes.

Our positive choices are inherently predictive too. How do I decide which novel to read next, what music to tune into, whose exhibition to attend? On the strength of what do I pass over unfamiliar Karajan recordings in favour of unfamiliar ones by Furtwängler, or as-yet-unread poems by Edward Thomas in favour of as-yet-unread ones by Yeats? Assuming that I'm under no particular social or practical pressure, I make these choices on the basis of predictions about what is more or most likely to provide me with enjoyment, or with aesthetic satisfaction. And these predictions can be based on a wide variety of grounds. Some will derive in a fairly immediate way from personal experience (I've heard and enjoyed Delius's other three concertos: let's give the piano concerto a go); others will come from the allegations of friends, including those with whom we normally disagree (Henry hated it: it can't be *all* bad); others again will be based on the recommendations of critics whose judgements we trust or fruitfully distrust; and still others will spring from the diffuser fact of a work's being famous or standard or notorious (I really must get round to seeing *Timon of Athens*

one of these days, or to reading *Ulysses*). But whatever the immediate source of my predictions, all are essentially based on *descriptions* of the works or kinds of works in question. All of them are based, in other words, on exactly the species of datum which aestheticians when they're not at home would disallow altogether. What does this show?

Perhaps it shows nothing much, or nothing of much interest. It might just be that we all have some rather bad habits—there would be nothing tremendously shocking in that. Or, what would be a lot more surprising, it might be that we are all fundamentally mistaken about the nature of aesthetic judgement. Or—and I imagine that this is what someone would most likely say—it might be that while we do have the regrettable habit of aesthetic prediction, our possession of this trait shows nothing of interest about our grip on aesthetic judgement, but only reflects depressingly on those practical conditions of our lives which force such short-cuts upon us: were there world enough and time, we might all be open to a much wider range of aesthetic experience.

There is clearly something right about this answer. Life is not long enough for the exercise of an altogether untrammelled pursuit of aesthetic reward, wherever and however improbably it might lurk. Nor perhaps are all of us capable of the relentless open-mindedness which such a pursuit would require. But this can't be the whole answer. For underlying it is the thought that the pursuit of aesthetic reward should ideally be indiscriminate, that it should cast its net as widely as is perceptually plausible. And that, surely, *would* be surprising—and for no one more surprising than for the person who tends to take canonical works as paradigms. Even on a fairly narrow construction, it seems, the view that the pursuit of aesthetic reward should be indiscriminate has the consequence of rendering the very idea of a canon unintelligible. For instance, the thought that a work's passing the test of time might confer upon it some unusual worthiness of regard would have to be ditched without ceremony—which would be strange, for however debatable the aesthetic advantage to be secured by passing that test may be, it is not, surely, a non-issue, simply to be dismissed. And at its limit such a view must include the thought that works of art enjoy absolutely no presumptive advantage, in aesthetic terms, over anything else (such as concentration camps, or gravel).

This strikes me as the oddest conclusion of all. Quite apart from the fact that it renders the idea of a canon unintelligible, any account of aesthetic experience which assigns no significant place to the experience of works of art must surely be mistaken. Whatever one's view of works of art, or of how they are properly to be thought about, it cannot be controversial to maintain that they do stand in some specially intimate relation to the aesthetic. In short, by eschewing even that most rudimentary prediction—that works of art might, by virtue of *being* works of art, be particularly promising sources of aesthetic satisfaction—the canonical objection not only undermines itself, but also subjects itself to a fairly frightening

reductio. The business of making aesthetic predictions, then, cannot simply be attributed to the unfortunate exigencies of mortality. It is not *merely* for the lack of world enough and time that we set ourselves up as knowing what we'll like.

III

Suppose we agree, then, that there is a crude sense in which a minimal amount of aesthetic prediction is essential to any recognizably aesthetic engagement with the arts. A sane proponent of the canonical objection might go along with this, but still insist that there is no excuse for predicting in favour or against any particular work of art, or even any class of artworks. To be sure, he might admit, one needs to focus one's attention on objects of the right general kind; but once one has done that, particular judgements must wait upon experience. As a perfectly persuasive corollary he might well ask whether we have never found ourselves surprised at liking something we thought we wouldn't, or at loathing something we expected to enjoy—in other words, whether we've never found ourselves making mistaken predictions. And of course we have; which should encourage us to make our predictions provisionally, not absolutely. But even a provisional prediction is sufficient for the guidance of action. By itself, obviously, to say this will merely strike the objector as underlining our essential irresponsibility and lack of seriousness. We recognize that our predictions are unreliable, yet nevertheless insist on limiting our aesthetic experience in light of them.

Any defence of aesthetic prediction, then, needs to do something more. Specifically, it needs to provide a principled distinction between irresponsible, capricious predictions and well-warranted ones. If such a distinction can be drawn, the position of the committed predictor will gain much in practical respectability; and if it can be drawn in the right way, it will gain in theoretical respectability too, as I hope to show.

Consider two examples. Suppose I am urged to read the latest Anita Brookner. And imagine I decline to do so on the grounds that she is female, living and middle-class (and hence no good). Have I ever read an Anita Brookner novel? Well, no (suppose I reply). Or ever enjoyed a novel written by someone female or middle class or alive? Well . . . Presumably no one would think this particular prediction well-warranted. Now imagine that I've been urged to read the same novel, and again decide against it, but this time on different grounds. I've read several of Anita Brookner's novels, under increasing protest. Her tiny stock of recurrent themes fails to engage my interest; I find her style translucent in all the wrong ways; I gather from reviews that the latest one is simply more of the same; and I feel oppressed by the certainty of what to expect. It seems to me that this prediction—which I recently made—is and was defensible, reasonable and wise. I've no idea whether it was accurate, because I acted on it. But I know what I like, and I'm morally certain it wouldn't be *that*.

There clearly is a distinction here. Crudely, it might be captured by saying that in the second case I know what I'm talking about whereas in the first I don't. But this way of making the distinction is too crude. What is it to know what one is talking about? What is it one needs to know? By virtue of *what* is the second prediction, though admittedly falling short of certainty, infinitely more respectable than the first? The answer I want to give is that the second prediction is well-warranted compared with the first by virtue of being grounded on a far more thorough and perspicuous exercise of *categorization*.

I take the notion of categorization from Kendall Walton's well-known paper, 'Categories of Art'.⁷ Walton's argument is set up in terms of appreciation and judgement rather than prediction. He holds, first, that it is a precondition of appreciating and judging a work of art that one sees (or hears or reads) it in the right category; and, second, that a category is to be characterized according to which properties, or kinds of property, are standard, variable and contra-standard relative to it. So, for example, the properties of being flat and varnished are standard relative to the category 'painting', while the properties of being noisy or made of asphalt are contra-standard. Variable properties include shape, colour, design, subject-matter, style, expression and meaning. Standard and contra-standard properties function to determine category membership. Once one sees something as a painting, one is no longer struck or distracted by the fact that it is flat and varnished. Instead, one's attention is focused upon the variable properties of the painting—its content, form, manner, meaning: upon the things that distinguish it from other members of the same category. So for Walton, correct categorization—which is achieved by a proper attention to standard and contra-standard properties—precedes and is a condition of aesthetic appreciation, which focuses principally on variable properties. Naturally, however, every work belongs to many different categories. For example, Rachmaninov's 2nd Piano Concerto belongs simultaneously to the categories 'piece of music', 'concerto', 'minor-key work', 'Romantic work', 'virtuoso work', 'Russian work', and so on, all of which are characterized by different standard and contra-standard properties. This has the result of limiting quite drastically the properties which, once the work has been extensively categorized, count as variable (for example, while the property of being written for soloist and orchestra is variable relative to most of the categories just mentioned, it is standard relative to the category 'concerto'). A good understanding of a maximal number of the relevant categories, then, which is to say a real knowledge of a given art-form and its history, is essential, in Walton's view, to any genuinely warranted act of aesthetic appreciation or judgement. Unless one knows how to see a work (i.e. to which categories it belongs), one won't know what to appreciate in it, where to look, or what to judge.

Those are the bones of Walton's account. I will not address the question whether that account tells a satisfactory story about aesthetic appreciation

or judgement. But it does do a beautiful job for aesthetic prediction. Category-membership is *essentially* a matter of descriptions—of which properties count as standard, contra-standard or variable. To assign something to its proper categories, then, is to mark out a range of descriptions that are or might be true of it. If a thing is correctly to be seen as a painting, then one can be virtually certain that it will be flat and covered with paint—for these descriptions are standard relative to the category. One can be equally certain that whatever aesthetic qualities it has will arise from the specific kinds of paint used, and the particular ways in which those paints have been distributed across the canvas—for these kinds and ways are the variable properties of paintings. By itself, of course, this tells one very little; and certainly too little to base any kind of action-guiding prediction on. But every work of art belongs to many categories at once. So for instance—and to return to my original example—the latest Anita Brookner does not merely belong to the category ‘literature’, say, from which one could conclude only that it has the standard property of containing words. It also belongs to the following categories: ‘short novel’, ‘sensitive novel’, ‘*Anita Brookner* novel’, among others. Its membership of these categories, and especially the last—which might be taken as shorthand for a number of more finely-grained categories—tells me rather a lot about it, and in advance. For instance, I can be pretty well certain that the novel will be more or less action-free, that it will feature a wholly passive protagonist, motivated only by the most delicately defeated of considerations, that the narrative tone will be self-abnegating, that the style will be so reserved as to be the merest husk of words, and so on. My understanding of short, sensitive novels by Anita Brookner tells me that these properties are standard. Thus I also understand exactly what kind of variable property to expect—exactly where the distinctive aesthetic advantages of this latest novel might reside. My interest will have to be focused on the finest shades of passivity, on the most faintly discriminable gradations of spiritual capitulation, on the minutest of actions, on the merest flickers of stylistic charge, the tiniest inflections of tone. It will be in these properties that the virtues of the book may confidently be anticipated to lurk. And virtues they may well be: the latest Anita Brookner novel may be a veritable *tour de force* on its own terms. But—and this is my point—I just know that I, personally, am more or less immune to the charms of virtues of that kind. The properties standard relative to the fine-grained categories that I have excellent reasons for supposing that the novel belongs to are properties that irritate me. And the range of properties which, relative to these categories, might be variable does not promise much in the way of enjoyment to someone who has the kind of aesthetic predilections that I have. In light of these considerations, it seems to me that my decision not to read the latest Anita Brookner is and was extraordinarily wise. My prediction against it could hardly have been better-warranted.

The propriety of this prediction contrasts tellingly with that of the other

prediction mentioned earlier. There, I decided against reading Anita Brookner's latest on the grounds, merely, that it had been written by a living, female, middle-class novelist. What was wrong with that prediction? Pretty obviously its flimsy categorization. The categorization was accurate, to be sure. But the slightest knowledge of literature will suggest that the properties standard to those categories are utterly vague, and hence that the properties variable relative to them are practically limitless. Thus my description of the work as having been written by a living, female, middle-class author tells me next to nothing about it—and certainly doesn't tell me enough to base any kind of worthwhile prediction upon. This prediction, then, is irresponsible and capricious because it is based on ill-informed and uninformative acts of category attribution. Well-warranted predictions, on the other hand, are those grounded upon proper and perspicuous categorization. Indeed—and to widen the net somewhat—it is on the strength of such well-warrantedness that while one might regret that Beethoven didn't live to compose a little longer or Keats to write a little longer, it is almost impossible to lament the world's lack of a few more Giacomettis or Francis Bacons. In these latter cases, standard properties have become so standard, and variable ones so minimally variable, that it seems unlikely that there would have been anything further of interest in store.

Taken together, I suggest, the foregoing considerations give us just the principled distinction between warranted and unwarranted predictions that we were after. Of course the deployment of such a distinction doesn't guarantee that someone who makes none but well-warranted predictions will never pass up the chance to experience a masterpiece. But this will present itself as an objection only to someone who insists that masterpieces are the norm and not the exception. For the rest of us, and for all of us when we are at home, the business of making aesthetic predictions is a practically indispensable and a theoretically respectable part of our aesthetic lives. This is a conclusion, and could only be a conclusion, in the philosophy of medium-grade art.

I have tried to show how the temptation to think in terms of canonical paradigms might lead one to misconstrue, or more likely to ignore, at least one familiar aspect of aesthetic experience. And I've tried to indicate how that aspect of aesthetic experience might be addressed when the temptation in question is resisted. It is not my intention, though, to suggest that we should all take up doing philosophy of medium-grade art. Quite a lot of it, I'm sure, is done anyway.⁸ But I would like to suggest that the distinction between canonical and medium-grade art should be borne in mind more explicitly than it usually is, and that one should be clear about which side of the distinction one is taking as standard. The natural tendency to take as paradigms the most valuable members of an inherently evaluative category such as art may obscure or foreclose as many issues as it clarifies or opens up. Sometimes, in other words, it might be better to let *Tristan* and *Lear* go their own ways, and to

concentrate instead on a list more like this: Fragonard's *The Swing*, Shaw's *Arms and the Man*, Forster's *The Longest Journey*, Mendelssohn's Fifth Symphony, Saint-Saënt's *Samson et Dalila*, Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. Not everything that is good of its kind is good full stop; and the good of its kind—figuring, as it surely does, in the bulk of our aesthetic experiences—might be interesting in ways that the good full stop is not. So if it wouldn't be sensible to become a philosopher of medium-grade art full-time, neither would it be sensible to fail to recognize consciously when one is being one, or when one ought, for particular purposes, to become one.

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NOTES

- ¹ The temptation and the tendency I am dealing with here is, I think, more or less ubiquitous, and I am sure that everyone will recognize it in themselves. To highlight its influence in the work of any particular philosopher would be invidious.
- ² The topic isn't entirely neglected. Mary Mothersill, for instance, refers to it in passing: see her *Beauty Restored* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), especially Chapter III. (My thanks to Peter Lamarque for pointing this out to me.)
- ³ I use the Russellian terminology of knowledge by acquaintance and by description in this context because it does the job economically. Whether that terminology is aptly used in other contexts is a different matter.
- ⁴ Diana Raffman, *Language, Music, and Mind* (Cambridge: M. I. T. Press, 1993).
- ⁵ Kendall Walton, 'Morality in Fiction and Fictional Morality', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume*, Vol. 68 (1994), pp. 27–50. See also Michael Tanner's reply to Walton, *ibid.*, pp. 51–66.
- ⁶ Howard Jacobson, *Peeping Tom* (London: Black Swan, 1985), p. 35.
- ⁷ Kendall Walton, 'Categories of Art', *Philosophical Review*, Vol. 79 (1970), pp. 334–367.
- ⁸ For an excellent recent example, see Raymond Tallis, *Newton's Sleep* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1995), Chapter 8—although perhaps Tallis is not so much doing philosophy of medium-grade art as of the medium-grade experience of art.

A COMPREHENSIVIST THEORY OF ART

Jason Holt

MATTHEW LIPMAN once remarked that many theories of art focus too narrowly on one or another aspect of the aesthetic process and, as a result, inhibit the understanding of that process as a whole.¹ On the basis of this complaint I shall call Lipman the founder of comprehensivism, by which I mean the view that art must be understood holistically, neither the artist, the artwork, nor the audience being excluded from an overall conception. My purpose here is to outline a definition of art in strict adherence to this view. To do so, I will have to give an account both of what artists do in creating artwork and of what happens to audiences in experiencing it. As any such account must in some sense be psychological in character, it seems natural to begin with a sketch, however rough, of the mind.

Mental states, no matter what ontological status one reserves for them, divide roughly into two broad categories. On the one hand there are beliefs, assumptions, doubts, conjectures, predictions, and so forth, which may be called intellectual states. On the other there are desires, hopes, fears, sorrows, anxieties, and so forth, which may be called emotional states. One reason for accepting this distinction, apart from its intuitive appeal, is that intellectual states embed propositional or otherwise representational content, while some emotional states do not. Whereas one can be depressed or happy or anxious without being depressed or happy or anxious about anything, one cannot believe or doubt or predict without believing or doubting or predicting something. Another way of putting this is that some emotional states can be freefloating, that is, unattached to specific contents. Not all emotional states are of this character, however; one presumably cannot desire without desiring something. But desires and beliefs have different directions of fit.² A belief is true when its content maps onto the world, while a desire is fulfilled when the world comes to map onto the desire's content. Intellectual states such as entertaining and wondering have no direction of fit and thus share this in common with emotional states such as sorrow and pleasure. But emotional states of this sort are complex in a way that entertaining and wondering are not. Entertaining a thought is simply to entertain it, while being sorry that, say, something happened involves a belief that it happened and a wish that it had not.

Cursory as they might be, the above remarks should illustrate that distinguishing between intellect and emotion is not inapt. Still, it would be unwise to suppose that this distinction constitutes a dichotomy, since there are some mental states (even setting aside the purely phenomenal aspects of experience) that do not fit neatly into either category. Convictions, and perhaps intuitions as well, seem more or less to be belief-like states invested with emotion. Further, as we have seen, some emotional states contain as essential elements certain intellectual states. The interaction across categories suggested by these cases is mirrored by the gross anatomy of the brain, as is the distinction on which this interaction depends. The higher cortex is intellectual and reflective, the diencephalon emotional and appetitive, the tissue between the two largely integrative in function. Both the mind's scope and limits, it has been argued, stem from a nearly constant conflict between the diencephalon and higher cortex.³ In intentional terms this amounts to three kinds of tension: that between inconsistent contents, as when I believe I should do one thing but want to do something else; that between states with the same content, as when I doubt that something is the case but wish it to be so; and that between intellectual states and freefloating emotions, as when I suppose there is nothing to be anxious about but am anxious nonetheless.

In applying this sketch of the mind to the problem of artistic creation, it should be clear that the sort of intentionality that concerns us is distinct from that commonly held to be at issue in the literature.⁴ What an artist intends to express in an artwork is less crucial to my analysis than the intentional form of many of the mental states that eventuate in the production of artwork. And so I will bracket debates that centre on the artist's intentions. But by so doing I do not mean to marginalize the importance of these debates, and offer as a default position that such intentions are largely irrelevant to the interpretation of artwork⁵, and that there are varying degrees to which intentions delimit and determine artistic expression.⁶ In addition, I will focus more on analysing expression itself than on justifying the already plausible notion that the creation of artwork is in some sense expressive.

An act of expression, understood broadly, is such that there is someone who performs it and something they express by performing it. Expression is at once expression *by* and *of*. For example, when someone says of Mozart's *Requiem* that it is moving, an opinion about the *Requiem* is expressed, and the speaker has done something, i.e. uttered a sentence, to express it. It does not matter so much whether the speaker must express the opinion in order to hold it, as some might claim, or whether it is possible simply to hold it without expressing it. What does matter is that the opinion can be expressed in various ways, or in the same way repeatedly, by contextually appropriate facial expressions or applause, by uttering or writing down the right words, and so on. That what is expressible at all is

capable of being expressed more than once means that an act of expression consists, partly if not fully, in tokening what is expressed.

Normally we understand expression as something one can do to oneself or to others, as the opiner may express her opinion to herself or, say, to other appreciators of music. The latter sort is the more aesthetically interesting, as it can take verbal, written, gestural, pictorial, symbolic, coded, or any number of forms in isolation or in combination, and as such is worth characterizing more precisely. The expression involved in the creation of art is of the latter kind, expressing to others, and in the sense that creation culminates in the finished artwork—the sculptor leaves behind a sculpture, the novelist a novel, the painter a painting, and so on—the act of expression can be seen as the objectification of what is expressed.⁷ This is not to say that artistic creation must occasion objects in the narrow sense, for this would unduly exclude performance and situationist art from the artwork class. Rather, artistic expression occasions objects in the broad sense, including performances and situations, that are accessible to and scrutinizable by the public, at least in principle.⁸

There is an obstacle to holding that artistic creation is the objectification of expression, and that is an ambiguity in 'expression', which can refer either to what is expressed or to the act of expressing it. If what is expressed is a mental state, then in many cases we can speak either of the state itself or of its content as the expression which is objectified, and the act of expression as what, through tokening it in the right way, objectifies it. As the objective mark of such an expressive act simply is the artwork, we can also speak of the act itself as being objectified in the work; it is both of these senses that I want the phrase 'objectified expression' to capture. The extent to which objectification is successful is the extent to which its product satisfies, for whatever reasons, the desire to express the mental states that gave rise to it. I mean to suggest by this that such satisfaction is all there is to a product's being the objectification of the mental states causally contributory to its production. Even in the allographic arts an artwork's production and the mental states causally contributory thereto, however intricate and protracted the causal pathway may be, are both objectified in the work. And they are objectified insofar as either the work or, in the case of a score or script, the prescription for its performance satisfies the artist in this minimal way.

Of course it does not follow that these mental states are palpably present, much less recognizable, in the artwork itself. Questions about what is expressed by Bach's F-minor Concerto, if they can be posed at all, are pretty much opaque to both careful analysis of the music and conjecture, well- or ill-informed, as to what was either on Bach's mind when he composed it or in the minds of the musicians who performed it. That expression can be objectified irrevocably incognito, in some artforms more obviously than in some others, is partly why minimal constraints should be placed on what counts as objectification. As to

what kinds of mental state can be objectified in artwork, I see no reason to be restrictive. Intellectual and emotional intentional states, their contents, and freefloating emotions may all, in various combinations and orderings, find expression in art.⁹ To indicate what strictures, if any, should be placed on this multitude requires a shift of attention from artistic creation to aesthetic experience, or in other words from the effective to the affective.

The sketch of the mind with which this paper began leads to an interesting conception of aesthetic experience. Art is valuable in part because acquaintance with it does something for the acquainted. If the view that aesthetic experience is more harmonious than chaotic, more symphonic than cacophonic,¹⁰ is at all convincing, then it seems that art elicits experiences unlike those that typify mental life generally. Experiences of this sort are not conflictual but resolute. In neuroanatomical terms this resolution is a cessation of conflict between the diencephalon and higher cortex. In psychological terms it is a mitigation of tension between occurrent intellectual and emotional mental states: inconsistent contents enter into higher order resolution, as when the belief that Othello will kill Desdemona and the desire that he not do so are cohered by a sense of tragedy; antagonism between states with the same or similar content is suspended, as when the belief and fear that Othello will commit murder do not issue in the crowd's rushing the stage to prevent it; freefloating emotions latch onto whatever best corrals them, as when one's general despair at the denouement of *Othello* falls under the concept of unfortunate desert. It should be emphasized that this resolution is not a quelling of either intellectual or emotional responses but rather a coherent engagement of both. In this way aesthetic experience is unlike base pleasure and detached abstraction, which amount to prescinding in the first case from the intellect and in the second from the emotions.

This notion of aesthetic experience tells us something about artistic creation. Once we realize that the creative process must be sustained in order for it to culminate in a finished artwork, it becomes clear that what sustains this process is the artists' appreciation, however inchoate, of the work they are bringing to fruition.¹¹ Since appreciation of artwork depends on experiencing it *as* artwork, part of the sustaining cause of its production is the artist's resolute experience of what the expressive act is coming to objectify. This is not to restrict the mental states which can be objectified in artwork to those which are related to resolution. Rather, any number of mental states are objectifiable in artwork provided there is a mediate resolution between the impetus for and result of their expression. The point is that resolution in the subject of aesthetic experience does not require, and should not be confused with, resolution in its object. The conclusion to *The Sun Also Rises*, for instance, lacks closure. But this irresolution is one without which the book would be vastly inferior.

Before moving on, I should distinguish this account from certain historical and contemporary alternatives. When Nietzsche speaks of 'the excitement of the

hearer which is Apollonian as well as Dionysian',¹² one might suppose that Apollo is to be taken as an icon of the intellect, Dionysus as an icon of the emotions. This would be hasty, for Nietzsche takes the Apollonian to subsume light, dream, and reflection, the Dionysian dark, primevum, and instinct,¹³ which cuts across my distinction. Santayana maintains that aesthetic experience is a mingling of sensory and perceptive pleasures. It would be odd to construe sensory pleasures as emotional and perceptive pleasures as intellectual, but were we to do so it should be pointed out that, for Santayana, the first kind of pleasure is prior to and requisite for the second, and each is a pleasure in its own right.¹⁴ Aesthetic experience on my account is not a mingling of pleasures but, if you will, a pleasure of mingling, and there need be no priority of one mingled element to another. Roger Scruton takes aesthetic experience to contain intellectual states, such as belief, as well as noncognitive phenomena of the imagination.¹⁵ By contrast, I emphasize the emotional nature of aesthetic experience. At the same time I do not deny that the imagination of the experiencer can contribute to their experience. Salient features of an artwork are interpreted, frequently by trial and error, such that the interpretation coheres with, and shapes to coherence, the elements of the experience pertinent to them. Granted, these remarks are a bit perfunctory. They are not, however, peremptory.

Now that the groundwork has been laid, I should like to propose, at least in outline form, a comprehensivist theory of art, the materials for which are the accounts of artistic creation and aesthetic experience achieved thus far. Artists objectify expression. Artworks are the objectification of that expression. Audiences experience that expression resolutely.¹⁶ The problem is that these aspects hang together in a way that does not mandate a univocal formulation in natural language. We can define art in terms of either the complex relation between artist, artwork, and audience, the process uniting the three, the object of aesthetic experience, or the subject of aesthetic experience. It would be arbitrary to follow only one of these tracks, but since art is readily identified in ordinary language with particular artworks, it is the third that I shall highlight. *Art is objectified expression elicitive of resolute experience.* More precisely, *x* is art if and only if *x* is objectified expression and *x* elicits resolute experience. Notice that this definition allows for the possibility that the same individual can be both artist and audience. Notice too that *x* may be instantiated by anything over which one can quantify, object or event, and into which one can objectify expression.

One of the nice implications of this proposal is that the concepts of artist, artwork, and audience are apodoses to the concept of art, not protases. Someone is an artist only if their expression is objectified into something that elicits resolute experience. Similarly, something is an artwork only if it is objectified expression elicitive of resolute experience.¹⁷ Aesthetic experience is likewise insufficient for the experiencer to qualify as an audience, sufficiency depending on whether the experience is elicited by objectified expression. Each aspect of the

aesthetic situation is therefore as dependent on the completeness of that situation as the situation is on it.

Consider the following cases. Suppose a lump of marble found in nature resembles Michelangelo's *David* exactly. Although its phenomenal properties are identical to those of *David*, it is not a statue, for it lacks the relational property of having come from an artist. Or again, suppose a vandal throws a brick through a window. We call the police. A situationist throws the same brick in the same way through the same window. We applaud. One difference is that the situationist elicits resolute experience while the vandal does not, even though both could be said to objectify expression in breaking the window. Another is that the situationist, unlike the vandal, does not really objectify expression in the breaking of the window but rather in the situation of so doing in front of an audience convened for that purpose. Certainly the vandal might implore comrades to bear witness to the destruction, and their witnessing might in fact be resolute. In cases of appropriate civil disobedience, and so forth, we might not be loathe to consider an act of vandalism as possessing artistic quality. I think it highly unlikely that witnessing an act of pure vandalism could really be resolute. But if it could, it would be presumptuous to allow an excessive elitism to rule it out of the artwork class altogether, since where aesthetics fails criticism can take up most of the slack.

Another implication is that art is in part a verdictive notion, since artwork is indexed to those who experience it resolutely. Objectified expression, in other words, must be found artistic in order to be artistic. There may be cases where objectified expression counts as artwork despite disputes about whether these cases should be so counted. On my proposal the resolute experience of anyone confers art status on the objectified expression that elicits it.¹⁸ It does not follow from this, though, that my proposal is relativistic. Art is dependent on but not determined by individual verdicts, for there are constraints on what counts as art independent of such verdicts. I may encounter objectified expression without at all having a resolute experience of it, yet I can still speak of it as an artwork, since others have experienced it as such.

Nor does it follow that aesthetics and art criticism should be unilaterally segregated. In one sense I would have criticism give aesthetics as wide a berth as possible. To derive standards of what art ought to be from conceptions of what it is, it seems, is to commit the naturalistic fallacy. However, the two are intimately connected. When it comes to interpreting artwork, or to deciding what sorts of thing merit aesthetic attention, critics are the experts to whom some measure of deference is owed. Limiting this deference is necessary because, if my view of artistic creation is right, interpretations of artwork can be better or worse than others, but not canonical.¹⁹ I am not claiming that the occurrence of resolute experience is more important than the way it is elicited. Nor am I claiming that the concept of art is nonevaluative. For the most part I have explored art's merely

descriptive aspects, leaving the prescriptive and the relations between it and the descriptive for those more sensitive to the task.

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NOTES

- ¹ M. Lipman, *What Happens in Art* (New York: Meredith, 1967), p. 15. See also W. Crozier and P. Greenhalgh, 'The Empathy Principle: Towards a Model for the Psychology of Art', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, Vol. 22, 1992, pp. 63-79.
- ² This is Searle's term. Some of what I say here is to be found in J. R. Searle, *Intentionality* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1983), pp. 1-2, 7-8. Searle does not explicitly emphasize the distinction that I do, though he might well have done.
- ³ See A. T. Simeons, *Man's Presumptuous Brain* (New York: Dutton, 1961), *passim*. For reasons why such an approach is viable, see C. A. Mace, 'Psychology and Aesthetics' in H. Osborne (ed.), *Aesthetics in the Modern World* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968), p. 285.
- ⁴ For recent discussions of this sort of intentionality, see S. Feagin, 'On Defining and Interpreting Art Intentionally', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 22, 1982, pp. 65-77; J. Duran, 'Collingwood and Intentionality', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 27, 1987, pp. 32-38; S. Davies, 'A Note on Feagin on Interpreting Art Intentionally', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 27, 1987, pp. 178-180; D. Kolak, 'Art and Intentionality', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 48, 1990, pp. 158-162; and L. Calhoun, 'The Intentional Fallacy', *Philosophy and Literature*, Vol. 18, 1994, pp. 337-338.
- ⁵ B. Vermazen, 'Expression as Expression', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 67, 1986, p. 202.
- ⁶ V. A. Howard, 'Expression as Hands-on Construction', *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 22, 1988, pp. 134-135.
- ⁷ C. J. Ducasse, *The Philosophy of Art* (New York: Dover, 1966), p. 112.
- ⁸ The proviso 'in principle' is crucial. Many artists produce artwork without it ever, or without the intent of it ever, achieving public presentation. This, I think, does damage to many institutional theories of art. See G. Dickie, 'The Institutional Conception of Art' in B. R. Tilghman (ed.), *Language and Aesthetics* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1973), pp. 21-30. One can reject such views, however, without giving up the notion that the character of art is social. See N. Carroll, 'Art, Practice, and Narrative', *The Monist*, Vol. 71, 1988, pp. 140-166.
- ⁹ Fragments of this view are suggested in J. Hospers, 'The Concept of Artistic Expression' in J. Hospers (ed.), *Introductory Readings in Aesthetics* (New York: Free Press, 1969), p. 145; Vermazen, *op. cit.*, p. 201; and W. Shibles, 'Humanistic Art', *Critical Review*, Vol. 8, 1994, pp. 371-392.
- ¹⁰ I. A. Richards et al., *The Foundations of Aesthetics* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1925), p. 76.
- ¹¹ Lipman, *op. cit.*, p. 15. Vermazen, *op. cit.*, p. 201.
- ¹² F. Nietzsche in W. Kaufman (ed.), *The Birth of Tragedy* (New York: Vintage, 1967), p. 132. This is a deliberate misquotation from Kaufman. Why? 'Apollonian' rings more Apollonian than 'Apollinian'.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, Sections 1-5, 21 and elsewhere.
- ¹⁴ G. Santayana, *The Sense of Beauty* (New York: Dover, 1955), p. 46.
- ¹⁵ R. Scruton, *Art and Imagination* (London: Methuen, 1974), p. 83.
- ¹⁶ It has been argued that psychological definitions of art are inadequate. See D. J. Dempster, 'Aesthetic Experience and Psychological Definitions of Art', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 4, 1985, pp. 153-165. While I agree that merely psychological definitions of

art are inadequate, a theory of art that incorporates aesthetic experience must, on pain of vacuousness, make reference to the psychological.

¹⁷ This obviates Wollheim's linkage problem. See R. Wollheim, *Art and its Objects* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 29. One makes sense of the links by making sense of the linkage, not vice versa.

¹⁸ It should be apparent that my view straddles proceduralist and functionalist aesthetic theories, although of the two trends I am more closely affiliated with the latter. By doing so I need not place excessive procedural constraints on the concept of art. For more on this see S. Davies, *Definitions of Art* (Ithaca: Cornell U. P., 1991), pp. 1-3.

¹⁹ If pushed on this point, I should refer the

reader to D. C. Dennett, *The Intentional Stance* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), *passim*. Dennett argues on Quinean grounds that there are no 'deep' facts about the content of anything meaningful, mental states, utterances, or what have you. The same goes for art.

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SYMBOLS, ICONS AND STUPAS

Roy W. Perrett

IN A recent article Jane Duran has argued that the usual Western historian's description of the Buddhist reliquary stupa in Indian art as a psycho-cosmic symbol is problematic.¹ This is because our notion of a symbol suggests that symbols are heavily conventional, but such a claim about stupas is implausible in the Indian cultural context. Nor should we say that the stupa is symbolic in an iconic sense. Instead she proposes that a Langerian analysis which connects the notion of the symbolic to notions of rite and play is more fruitful for understanding both stupas and our notions of symbol and symbolic.

While I agree that connecting the notion of the symbolic to notions of ritual and play may indeed be useful, I shall argue that (*pace* Duran) the more usual senses of *symbol* and *icon* can quite plausibly be used of the Buddhist stupa.

First, some terminology. The term *symbol* is used in various ways in the literature of aesthetics. I shall be using the term in the familiar way it is used in classical semiotic theory. The *locus classicus* here is, of course, Charles Sanders Peirce's theory of signs. Peirce defines a *sign* as 'something that stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity' (2.228).² In other words, the signification relation is irreducibly *triadic*: its characteristic form is 'X interprets Y as Z' or 'Y is a sign of Z to X'. Peirce further divides the class of signs into three categories: icons, indices and symbols.

An *icon* is 'a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own' (2.247). Such a sign is suited to represent anything with the corresponding characters. Icons thus isomorphically share properties with what they represent, often in a useful fashion (as when a colour sample is an icon for the paint in a particular tin, or a floorplan is an icon for a room).

An *index* is 'a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that Object' (2.248). That is, there is a dyadic 'natural' relation between sign and object which is independent of our practices of using the sign in certain ways. Thus smoke is an index of fire, low barometric pressure is an index of impending rain.

A *symbol* is 'a sign which is constituted a sign merely or mainly by the fact that it is used and understood as such' (2.307). Thus the signs of the *devanāgarī* script are symbols for various sounds in the Sanskrit language. The script does not

exploit any resemblance between the letters and the sounds, nor is there a 'natural' causal relation between the letters and the sounds. Instead there is a general practice of using the script for this purpose and the letters are symbols by virtue of this convention.

Duran does not define what she means by the terms *symbol* and *icon*. However, her reason for opposing the usual description of stupas as symbols is that the notion of a symbol requires that symbols are heavily conventional, but that in ancient India both the time period and level of literacy would have prevented such conventionalization (pp. 67, 72). This claim seems to imply a notion of symbol that at least overlaps with Peirce's with respect to the emphasis on the conventionality of symbols.

Is Duran's argument here sound? I suggest it is not. Firstly, note that the Peircean semiotic account of the general triadic nature of signs entails that a sign is a sign *for someone*. Hence when we claim that 'Y is a sign of Z' we are really claiming that 'Y is a sign of Z for X'. But it is not necessary for the truth of our claim that *everyone* understands Y to be a sign of Z. Instead when we make claims about symbols we usually operate with contextually implicit restrictions of scope. Thus when historians of ancient India claim that the Buddhist stupas were symbols of certain complex psychological and cosmic states, this claim cannot be refuted by the rejoinder that large numbers of people of that period did not understand them as such (any more than the claim that in ancient India certain *devanāgarī* signs were symbols for certain Sanskrit sounds can be refuted by the undoubted fact that very large numbers of people of that period did not understand them as such). The conventionality of symbols requires an established practice of some sort, but not a universal practice.

Accordingly historians' claims about stupas as symbols are surely supposed to be understood as claims of implicitly restricted scope about the understanding of a, possibly quite small, class of Buddhist practitioners (much as historians' claims about, say, the symbolism of Gnosticism, Jewish Kabbalah or Sufi poetry are to be understood as claims about the understanding of certain, possibly quite small, groups of religious practitioners in the societies of those periods, rather than as claims about the understanding of the members of those societies in general). In other words, Duran's claim that '[we] think of Western religious symbols as symbolic because we assume that they will be understood by many or most adults functioning within the culture' (p. 71) is far too strong.

Secondly, Duran supposes that the level of literacy in ancient India would have precluded the availability to the general Buddhist community of the conventions necessary for the stupas to function as symbols for them: 'We can hypothesize that literacy and acquaintance with the more ramified parts of the Buddhist tradition would have a great bearing on a supplicant's ability to make the relevant associations, and there is no reason to believe that many would have been so able' (p. 67). In fact this very dubious and unsupported assertion shows little

understanding of the importance of oral traditions in India and of the historical situation that gave rise to the building of the stupas and the growth of the cults associated with them.

Although there existed writing systems in ancient India from before the time of Asoka (c. 268–232 BCE), the oral tradition has always been very much privileged over the written. Scribes in India have had a low status and the texts they write are judged very unreliable. The written word is valued only as a teaching aid for those too dull to remember. Indeed the very act of writing is held to be ritually polluting in a late Vedic text, where it is said that a pupil should not recite the sacred Veda after eating meat, seeing blood or a dead body, having intercourse or engaging in writing.³ Even when a considerable body of written texts emerges along the way, these are only regarded as part of an essentially oral tradition. In India it is this oral tradition that is held to embody the pure transmission of knowledge, and even today access to traditional knowledge of subjects like art, music, grammar or philosophy is widely held to require a direct oral transmission from master to pupil.

This general feature of Indian learning is also preserved in the living Tibetan Buddhist tradition, which derives from Indian Buddhism.⁴ Furthermore, in Tibetan Buddhism (as in Indian Tantric Buddhism) there are very complex visualization meditations that require the practitioner's understanding of an intricate system of symbols. Typically a practitioner's understanding of such symbols is primarily due to an *oral* explanation by a lama. To be sure, there are written texts explaining some of this symbolism, but these are often deliberately incomplete in their details. Moreover, many Tibetan Buddhist lay practitioners cannot read them anyway, either because they are illiterate in classical Tibetan or because of the scarcity of printed copies of the texts. Nevertheless these practitioners have an excellent grasp of the symbolism involved in their traditional Buddhist practices, which they are well able to articulate orally.

These considerations about the primacy of the oral tradition in India need to be coupled with what is known historically about the growth of stupa worship in India.⁵ Stupas were originally erected after the death and cremation of Gautama Buddha in order to accommodate his remains. During the early period of Buddhism lay-persons made offerings to the Buddha's remains, but monks were prohibited from concerning themselves with his funeral ceremonies. Gradually the term *stūpa* came to include not only such funerary stupas, but also *caityas* or sacred sites where no relics were enshrined. Following Asoka's conversion to Buddhism, stupa worship spread throughout India and various sects apparently formed around some of these stupas.

At first these stupas were constructed and administered by lay-persons and were not affiliated with any of the monastic schools or sects. Soon, however, stupas were also constructed within monastic compounds and monks came to worship at them. But monks were not permitted to live within the precincts of

the stupa nor to receive alms offered to the stupa. Thus the stupas became economically independent institutions (despite monastic counter-arguments that stupa offerings were of little karmic merit). Subsequently groups of believers began to dwell around the stupas, supporting themselves with the offerings made to these stupas. They came to be regarded as independent religious specialists who assisted pilgrims to the stupas, arranging lodgings for them and instructing them in the practice of worship and the significance of the carvings there.

These religious specialists were not ordained Buddhist monks (*bhiksus*), though they resembled monks and nuns in the way they served as leaders of orders, taught lay-persons and received alms from them. They also engaged in strict religious practices. The religious activities of these specialists were a crucial factor in the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism, with its greater hospitality to the aspirations of lay practitioners. Stupas came to be more than objects of worship. They eventually became centres for a new class of monastic Mahāyāna practitioners, with quarters for lay devotees located nearby. The building of stupas, the carving of images, and the worship and offerings made at stupas all became included within the variety of practices leading to the attainment of the Mahāyāna ideal of Buddhahood.

This close historical connection between the growth of stupa worship and the laity, coupled with the primacy of the oral tradition in India, means that there are actually very good grounds for supposing that the conventions governing the symbolism of stupas would have been widely understood in the ancient Indian Buddhist community, notwithstanding the level of literacy. The religious specialists at the stupas (many of whom in later times would have been literate) would have orally instructed those many lay-persons whose alms supported the specialists. The popularity of stupa worship in India and the subsequent spread of the architectural form and its associated practices throughout the Buddhist world suggest this instruction was rather successful.

Duran's central argument from conventionality for supposing that it is problematic to claim that stupas are symbols thus fails. What about her rejection of the suggestion that stupas are icons? Her argument here is less forthright. She says: 'It does not make sense to say that the stupa is symbolic in the flatter, more fully iconic sense in which we so often use the term for European symbols, because our knowledge of the culture indicates that the relationships are more fluid' (p. 73). However, she also wants to allow that 'the fit between symbol and thing signified should at least be somewhat iconic' (p. 71).

Although Duran does not develop her reasons here in any detail, her ambivalence is easy to sympathize with. On the one hand, to say that stupas are symbols seems to suggest that their relation to what they signify is just conventional. But the fit between the stupa and the psycho-cosmic states it signifies seems tighter than that. On the other hand, to say that the stupa is an

icon of such states seems to suggest that the relation is entirely non-conventional and hence to make the fit a bit too tight.

Perhaps we can at least blunt the first horn of this dilemma a little by remembering that to say that a symbol is something with a conventional significance does not imply that a symbol's significance is simply decided by an arbitrary fiat. While it is true that it is of the nature of a convention that it might have been otherwise, it does not follow from this that conventions are arbitrarily selected. As David Lewis has shown in some detail, conventions are often adopted as solutions to recurrent problems that can be modelled as game-theoretical coordination problems: like which side of the road to drive on, or which language to adopt.⁶ The structure of such co-ordination problems sets quite specific constraints on what will count as a solution; in this sense the convention adopted as the solution is definitely not arbitrary.

Now even if the existence of such coordination problems is not necessary for conventions, it is sufficient.⁷ Moreover, the practice of pictorial depiction arguably involves solving such a co-ordination problem: the depicter wants her audience to recognize both what her picture is of and that it is a picture, where these two aims can only be achieved by performing a single complex task.⁸ The growth and adoption of pictorial conventions arise as solutions to this co-ordination problem and in this sense these conventions are not arbitrary. In so far as stupas are pictorial symbols, they too utilize such non-arbitrary conventions.

But while this may alleviate some of our uneasiness about describing stupas as symbols, it still does not go all the way. There remains a strong temptation to regard stupas as more than merely conventional (albeit non-arbitrary) signs. Surely the relation between the stupa and what it is a sign of is supposed to be tighter than that, more isomorphic. Historians like Rowland, for instance, tell us that even the very groundplan of the stupa represents the cosmic structure and that the pilgrim's circumambulation of the stupa mirrors the course of both the sun and the Buddha's life.⁹ In other words, is not the stupa better described as an *icon*, rather than a symbol?

This suggestion has some plausibility. After all, at least according to Peirce's semiotic, a floorplan is an icon for a room. When we use a floorplan to study the properties of a room, we exploit a property of the sign which it would have had even if its object had not existed. This is possible because of an isomorphism between the plan and the room: there is a correspondence between properties which each could have had whatever the character of the other. A floorplan can thus provide us with information about the room it plans. For instance, given an understanding of the conventions of representation and scale, measurements on the plan provide us with information about the dimensions of the room. Similarly, the groundplan of the stupa can provide us with knowledge about the nature of the cosmos.

The worry about this suggestion, however, is that it seems to make the relation between the stupa and what it signifies not conventional enough. But in fact that difficulty only arises if we are supposing that the stupa has to be a *pure* icon. In most sign systems, all the signs are to some extent symbols. Take icons like floorplans, for instance. It is only because there exists a general practice of using floorplans that we are able to apply floorplans. In this sense the floorplan is a sort of conventional symbol. However, once we have a general convention that tells us how to use the floorplan as an icon, we do not need a specific convention to determine the meaning of each floorplan. While there may be some highly conventional signs that involve no iconic or indexical elements and hence are pure symbols, our usual examples of icons and indices are not pure. Peirce certainly recognized this point and, as was his wont, coined a neologism for it: 'Any material image, as a painting, is largely conventional in its mode of representation; but in itself, without legend or label it may be called a *hypoicon*' (2.276).

The stupa is, I suggest, such a 'hypoicon', i.e. not a pure icon, but a symbol with iconic features. As such it is at least partly conventional. Interestingly it is this feature that provides a context for understanding the importance of ritual practice in inculcating an understanding of the general conventions which govern the use of such a sign. It is well recognized that the stupas were constructed so that the pilgrim's circumambulation of the stupa should provide an experience which mirrored the passage to Buddhahood. That is, the pilgrim's ritual practice deliberately symbolically re-enacted the course taken by the Buddha, locating this within the cosmos.¹⁰ This mimetic practice, doubtless guided by the religious specialists resident at the stupa, thus provided a way of initiating practitioners into the general conventions governing the symbolism of the stupa. Thus initiated, the practitioners were themselves able to utilize the stupa's iconic features.

I conclude, then, that the customary description of the Buddhist stupa as a symbol is not so very problematic. However, perhaps the most accurate description (at least in the terminology of Peirce's semiotic) is that the stupa is a 'hypoicon', i.e. a (semiotically) impure icon that is also a symbol.

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NOTES

¹ Jane Duran, 'The Stupa in Indian Art: Symbols and the Symbolic', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (January 1996), pp. 66-74. The description of stupas as 'symbols' is a commonplace among historians of Indian art

and religion. Duran cites Benjamin Rowland's well known *The Art and Architecture of India* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1967) in this respect. Two further representative titles may serve as indices of a general trend: Lama Anagarika

- Govinda, *Psycho-cosmic Symbolism of the Buddhist Stupa* (Emeryville: Dharma, 1976) and Adrian Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stupa* (Ithaca. Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1985)
- ² Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. P., 1965). I follow custom and cite references to this work by volume and paragraph number (thus 2.228 for Vol. 2, para. 228). There is a very large secondary literature on Peirce. Personally I have found Christopher Hookway's *Peirce* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985) particularly useful.
- ³ *Ālitreya Anuśāṅga* 5.5.3 as quoted in Frits Staal, 'The Concept of Scripture in the Indian Tradition', in Mark Juergensmeyer and Gerald Barner (eds), *Sikh Studies* (Berkeley Berkeley Religious Studies Series, 1979), pp. 122-123. On the primacy of the oral in the Indian religious traditions, see also William A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), Chap. 6; and Harold Coward, *Sacred Word and Sacred Texts* (Maryknoll Orbis, 1988).
- ⁴ For a perceptive discussion of some aspects of the oral tradition in Tibetan Buddhism, see Anne Carolyn Klein, *Path to the Middle: Oral Madhyamika Philosophy in Tibet* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 1-28.
- ⁵ A seminal article here is Hirakawa Akira, 'The Rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its Relationship to the Worship of Stūpas', *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Tōyō Bunko*, Vol. 22 (1963), pp. 57-106. For further references, see his *A History of Indian Buddhism from Śākyamuni to Early Mahāyāna* (Honolulu University of Hawaii Press, 1990), pp. 339-340.
- ⁶ David K. Lewis, *Convention. A Philosophical Study* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969).
- ⁷ For the claim that recurrent co-ordination problems are not necessary for the development of conventions, see Stephen R. Schiffer, *Meaning* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 151-152.
- ⁸ For an extended argument to this effect, see David Novitz, *Pictures and Their Use in Communication* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977), Chap. 2.
- ⁹ Rowland, pp. 50-51 (as cited in Duran, pp. 66-67).
- ¹⁰ The most spectacular example of this sort of phenomenon, however, is not actually located in India. It is the stupendous, multi-levelled Buddhist monument at Borobudur in Java (alluded to by Duran on p. 72). Of this Dietrich Seckel writes. 'Borobudur has rightly been called a psychophysical pilgrim's path: the terraces lead the pilgrim through the different cosmic spheres, levels of apprehension, and stages of redemption. It is an initiation course into the Buddhist faith, executed in stone' [*The Art of Buddhism* (New York: Crown, 1964), p. 132].

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BOOK REVIEWS

Playing with the Edge: The Photographic Achievement of Robert Mapplethorpe. By ARTHUR C. DANTO. University of California Press. 1996. 29 illus pp. xii + 194. US\$24.95.

THIS is a fatally effusive tribute by a celebrated aesthetician to an artistic celebrity. Professor Danto's decency responds to Mapplethorpe's lubricity with a liberality that gives relief to a liberal's sense of embarrassment. He discharges a felt disquiet in an excess of appreciation that is itself an exercise in the Hegelian *Aufhebung* (negation, preservation, transcendence) that he ascribes to Mapplethorpe's more piquant images (p. 80). Mapplethorpe aestheticized, and Danto apotheosizes; the effect is half art history, half hagiography. There is also an accidental cause: the long illustrated essay that lends the present book its title originally accompanied a lavish printing of two hundred photographs that was a monument to the departed, and it is the function of funeral orations not to put the dead in their place. (This book is padded out with an earlier article, without illustrations, that is more playful in tone—its subject was then neither *cause célèbre* nor casualty—but reads now like a first draft, and not less than fifty pages of chronology, list of exhibitions, and bibliography.)

The reader is given early warning that Danto is ill at ease by a prose of a dyslexic refinement. The sentence 'My wife, whose sensibilities I absolutely respect, gave the text the benefit of a delicate reading' (p. ix) is delicious in its delicacy and infelicity. When he commends the College Art Association for publishing the images that were about to become notorious 'in the spirit of visual knowledge' (p. 9), he writes according to the spirit of philosophy, but surely not the letter. When he finds 'a confession of aliteracy' in a boast by Mapplethorpe that he did read the *New York Post* (p. 14), he is tactfully illiterate himself. On

leaving the 1988 Whitney exhibition, he writes, 'I was excited' (p. 14). The tone is reverential, indeed religious. He dwells on the casual cause of his paying the exhibition a visit (p. 3), the silence or hushed tones of the other visitors (p. 5), and his emotions on leaving ('profoundly stirred', 'grateful beyond measure', p. 13) as if he were testifying to a conversion experience. With the religiosity comes morality. Sado-masochists are 'recorded [in] the extremity of their sexual being with an uninflected clarity and candor' (p. 9). But candour is too easily achieved and applauded, and Danto finds a rarer moral value in the consensuality:

In order to be in control, Mapplethorpe required his subjects' agreement, their knowledge, and, as emphasized, their trust. The moral relationship between subject and artist was a condition for the artistic form the images took. The formalism was connected to the content through the mediation of that moral relationship. (p. 79)

These approving observations are made problematic, as he concedes (p. 59), by two photographs not only displaying but coyly emphasizing the genitals of young children, of whom the boy looks blithe, but the girl slightly and poignantly apprehensive. For Mapplethorpe, it appears, trust, unlike control, was an optional value. (It was more central to Herbert List, a gay photographer of an earlier generation whose work eclipses Mapplethorpe's in the range of its visual imagination without taking the same risks or permitting the same inflation.)

That Danto will defend Mapplethorpe by a confusion of categories is evident in his description of the photographer's favoured subjects as 'individuals for whom a certain kind of sexuality was their attribute in the same way as a

certain kind of suffering, embodied in some instrument of torment and degradation, was the attribute of the martyr' (p. 9). That is innocence by association. What disconcerts is less the incongruity of the comparison than the sheer slackness of thought. Here, as in much of the book, Danto proceeds by free suggestion, juxtaposing sacred and profane, trivial and profound, as if achieving a revaluation were as easy as making a joke. He derives from the western tradition not a source of meant significance, but a set of tricks to be pulled from a conjuror's sleeve. Of course, the effect is self-regarding. The photographer supplies the theme on which the professor plays his variations.

Danto's ostensible exaltation of Mapplethorpe—if I may invert his use of the term—duly reaches its climax in a long and wooly glorification (pp. 87–95) of 'Jim and Tom, Sausalito, 1977', a set of three stills of one man urinating into the mouth of another. This scene, in those years, was commonplace enough (I read in Knut Koch's engaging autobiography *Barfuß als Prinz* that to join in one had only to look up 'toilet' in the New York Gay Guide), but Mapplethorpe transforms it in a manner that certainly transcends documentary: a glaring shaft of light falling diagonally half illuminates a metal ladder to cast a shadow of horizontal bars on a 'scored and soiled wall' (as Danto nicely captures it, p. 88) behind the participants. One may find in the pattern of light, ladder, bars, and wall a telling ambiguity: the bars appear to create a prison, the rungs an escape. Danto turns, explicitly this time, to religion:

The ladder can be a symbol of ascent, the light a symbol of grace. The image retains its identity, and yet is brought up into the plane of art. Even the fact that it is made into a triptych carries a spiritual connotation: it was after all a form evolved for altarpieces. (p. 91)

He compares 'a theme widely used in baroque art, that of "Roman Charity", where a daughter makes a gift of her breast to her shackled father' (p. 90). He finds a 'lubricity' in that scene, just as he perceives a 'benefit' bestowed in Mapplethorpe's (pp. 90–91) (Well, Koch admits to feeling a warm gratitude as

recipient that he had to express by the words 'Thank you—thanks!') His feeling is that 'Mapplethorpe's Catholicism affects the sense of transcendence carried by this image', in that 'what is finally Catholic is the abiding mystery of spirit and flesh' (pp. 91–92)—as he has already instanced within a Bellini 'Madonna and Child' (pp. 64, 80–81). Hence, 'It is a very mysterious image' (p. 92). What is Danto disclosing or inventing for us here? Mysteriousness without a mystery to be revealed, flesh with only an aping of spirit, symbols symbolizing nothing believed in; in short, high camp, but not high art. I prefer a remark that he quotes from Mapplethorpe himself, precusely if one does *not* distort its tone, as he does, by finding it 'profound' "I don't think anyone understands sexuality. What's it about? It's about an unknown, which is why it's so exciting" (p. 92). In abusing art and religion rather as Jim abuses Tom, but without their consent, Danto may leave a worse taste in the mouth than Mapplethorpe, or Jim.

Sadly, the whole book is overblown. Danto could well write an 'alternative' inspirational introduction to a popular exhibition of the 1970s. Sexually, he surmises, it was a decade beyond compare: 'Whatever one might think of it, sex was probably lived more creatively in those years when the barriers to its enactment had fallen than at any other time in history' (p. 8); that procreative sex is uncreative is a paradox not to be incurred inadvertently. Within this century, the same years stand out socially and aesthetically: Mapplethorpe 'embodied the seventies in America, which was certainly socially and, in a view I am becoming increasingly convinced of, artistically the most important decade of the century' (p. 21). (How 'socially'? Were those who lived out their lives before 1970 less important than those who came after?) And Mapplethorpe was 'perhaps the artist of his own time' (p. 74)—a time to which, implicitly, the vast majority of his contemporaries failed to belong. Returning to earth, we might rather characterize him as a fashion photographer who carried over a heightened formalism into the creation of strange and stylized erotic images. There are words to be found about his legacy and leaveings (certainly to be distinguished) that are not untrue and not

unkind. Danto is well able to say them, as he displays in a witty and perceptive paragraph about 'Mark Stevens (Mr. 10½), 1976' (pp. 107–109) that is by far and away the best thing in the book. As he aptly observes, 'The photograph in fact belongs to a genre that glamorizes objects like jewelry' (p. 109). 'Playing at the edge'—edge being, of course, 'that focal term of Mapplethorpean aesthetics' (p. 117)—is a phrase indeed apt to the indeterminable status of Mapplethorpe's legacy: neither mystery nor pornography, neither high art nor advertising, neither Giovanni Bellini nor Albert Watson. It is a pity that Danto puts it instead, out of place like Mr 10½'s penis, on a pedestal.

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Art and Philosophy. Seven Aestheticians By SUSHIL KUMAR SAXENA. Indian Council of Philosophical Research. 1994. pp. 362. No price given.

THIS BOOK is intended, in the author's words, to be 'a clear, comprehensive and fairly critical account of some select aestheticians' theories of art and the aesthetic... through searching attention to the original writings of the thinkers selected', and is written explicitly with a student readership in mind. The seven aestheticians in question are Croce, Collingwood, Ducasé, Dewey, Santayana, Langer, and Reid. On the dustjacket Jerome Stolnitz is reported as stating that there is 'nothing in the current literature that does the same thing in the same way', a claim which, simply given the list of philosophers treated, is certainly justified. But more on the choice of subjects shortly.

The seven are dealt with separately in self-contained chapters which can be read independently. The chapters vary considerably in length, those on Dewey, Santayana, and Langer each being well over twice as long as the others. All (with the exception of Chapter Five) follow more or less the same format, with defined sections of pure exposition followed by one of critical discussion. (The chapter on Santayana is wholly expository.) There is no substantial introduction to the book, the selection of subject

matter being briefly explained in a two page preface. Aside from this, and the odd comment at the beginning of three of the chapters, there is no real attempt to link up the various discussions or reveal any unfolding intellectual direction. In spite of this, it is not hard to discern a certain unity to the collection in that the thinkers discussed can all, in various ways, be said to work in the shadow of the idea that art is fundamentally expression, and a concern with expression runs throughout the book.

Saxena's decision to treat these philosophers' theories independently, sometimes (as with Croce and Dewey) relating them to their wider philosophical systems, coupled with his aim to present as much significant expository detail and spread of critical responses as possible, makes for an extremely dense book that resists summary. Croce and Collingwood are, of course, well-known as proponents of the classic expression theory of art, and for the claim that works of art are essentially completed in the mind of the artist. Ducasé offers a different version of expression theory according to which 'aesthetic' art is 'the conscious objectification of one's feelings' (The taxonomy of arts detailed on p. 61 is perhaps indicative of why Ducasé has remained an obscure figure in aesthetics.) Art as such is the activity of expression of feelings, the products of which—paintings, statues, etc.—are works of art. Perhaps the key difference separating Ducasé from Croce and Collingwood is the former's insistence that artistic expression is *externalization* of an inner state, the putting of feelings into objects.

For Dewey, art is on a continuum with ordinary experience; it is what you get when experience attains a certain (satisfying) degree of unity, intensity, integration, completeness. An experiential cadence, one might say. Art is not 'autonomous', it is a part of human life; and aesthetic experience is not some *suu generis* response, but is continuous with 'the very processes of living as these are carried to unexpected happy fulfillment'. Santayana, according to Saxena, shares with Dewey the view that 'art is a continuation, by means of intelligent selection and arrangement, of natural tendencies of natural events'. But while the making of art for

Santayana is indeed but one realization of our general 'plastic instinct' to make and mould things, he believes it is also the express embodiment of an 'ideal', the creation of 'outer things [in] sympathy with inner values', the rationalization and humanization of objects. (The chapter also contains an extensive exposition of Santayana's well-known claim that beauty is 'objectification of pleasure'.)

In Susanne Langer's work we have another explicitly expressionist theory of art. In her words: 'A work of art is an *expressive form created for our perception through sense or imagination*, and what it *expresses* is human feeling.' Art is peculiarly valuable in this respect because it is able, through *symbolization*, to 'present the nature and patterns of sensitive and emotional life' in a way that ordinary language cannot do. The elements of Langer's rich account are familiar: artworks are 'presentational symbols' expressing the 'forms of feeling'—'feeling' being a generic term for 'everything that can be felt', sensations, emotions, intellectual tensions, and so on. The final chapter explains Louis Arnaud Reid's theory of art as 'creative aesthetic embodiment'. Reid's ideas develop through a sustained critique of the concept of expression as used by Langer. He believes that 'expression' should be replaced by 'embodiment' as the central concept for art, a move that would shift attention away from (allegedly detachable) feelings and ideas expressed and directly towards the art-object itself in which such feelings are embodied. At the end of this chapter, Saxena delivers what can only be described as a short homily aimed at supplanting the concept of expression (or embodiment) with that of *presence* as the fundamental concept for aesthetics (the artwork, once created, will 'become a presence' for spectators who are open to receive it in certain specified ways).

This is a difficult book to *assess* in that its seeming strengths can also be regarded as weaknesses. As I have said, its primary aim is to provide detailed, unbiased and comprehensive expositions of the various theories chosen, with a premium placed on close attention to the original writings. In this the book certainly succeeds, and Saxena may be commended for the fair-minded, sympathetic and thorough way he has approached

his subjects. Clarity is another matter, though, and in this regard it is arguable that there is simply too much detail and (far) too much use of quotation. The excessive detail often makes it difficult to extract the most important ideas of a theory (which, given the intended student readership, is a marked defect), and the constant quotation precludes any real textual flow, making generally for awkward reading.

In the critical discussions of each philosopher, Saxena has likewise aimed for comprehensive coverage of as many actual and possible objections to the various theories as can be fitted in. Unfortunately this inclusiveness has been at the expense of properly integrated discussion and adequate analysis, with an over-reliance on rhetorical questions to make points, and many arguments left hanging. Too often also seemingly minor issues are treated with the same weight as more serious ones. For instance, of twelve objections levelled against Collingwood, quibbles over his views concerning the initial inchoateness of the emotions an artist expresses, or whether good actresses need have 'the ability to weep real tears', take up as much space as discussion of his far more significant and influential claims about the distinction between art and craft, and the essential internality of the artwork—neither of which receive anything but the most cursory treatment. And staying with Collingwood, the objection Saxena spends most time elaborating—against Collingwood's claim that poets do not (or should not) *describe* emotions (generally) but instead *individualize* them through expression—is vitiated both by an extraordinary failure to distinguish between proper names and general names (Saxena asks rhetorically why the name 'anger' should not be said to individualize one's emotion, given that proper names 'individualize' people), and by his 'counter-examples' (of effective poetry in which names of emotions occur) seeming more to establish Collingwood's point than his own, in that it is patently not the mere reference to the emotion which accounts for the expressive power of the lines in question. These are just a few small examples of imbalance and loose argumentation from one chapter; but they are, I believe, not unrepresentative of much of the critical

discussion elsewhere in the book.

Now to the choice of subject matter. In the 1990s this particular selection of theories to examine is undeniably idiosyncratic, and at the very least a substantial introduction is needed that would place these theorists (some of whom, to put it mildly, are hardly household names in modern aesthetics) in relation to each other, and provide some rationale for the project. As it is, the preface mystifies rather than illuminates. We are told, for example, that because Ducasse has a 'vigorous empiricist style of argument' it is 'but a step' to Dewey's 'empirical naturalism or naturalistic empiricism'. On reading the respective chapters one wonders as to the dimensions of the creature taking this 'step'. As I have suggested, a unifying theme that could usefully have been articulated and motivated was that of expressionism.

There is, of course, nothing wrong with re-examining philosophical ideas and theories from the past; nevertheless, we have to be clear why we do so. For, while there is an obvious sense in which philosophical ideas are 'timeless', it is also the case that unless ideas relate clearly to the intellectual concerns of a particular time their interest can be limited. Ideas from the past are usually studied for one or both of two reasons: (a) they have contemporary interest in themselves; and (b) they have played a significant role in shaping particular philosophical traditions which themselves have contemporary interest. In the case of (a), it is necessary to show the contemporary interest these ideas have; in the case of (b), it is necessary to explain the role of these ideas in shaping the intellectual traditions we have inherited. Unfortunately, Saxena's book does neither. The terms in which he presents and (more importantly) discusses the ideas are somewhat dated, and have little direct relevance to the way aesthetics has developed in the past thirty years. (With a couple of exceptions, no reference is made to any philosophical work of the last twenty-five years.) And it is hard really to see the book in the second light either, given the absence (already mentioned) of any unifying discussion to locate expressionism in general, or these theories in particular, in the history of twentieth century aesthetic thought.

For all these reasons, *Art and Philosophy: Seven Aestheticians* is likely to have limited appeal for both students and professionals. Saying this, it would be wrong to give the impression that there is nothing of interest or value in this book. Certainly anyone unfamiliar with the aestheticians in question can gain a great deal from the detailed expositions offered, and will at least be introduced to a wide variety of issues arising from their work. Saxena clearly has a refined and sincere appreciation for music and poetry, and one of the distinguishing features of the book is his frequent use of examples of arts from India to illustrate philosophical points. These examples are often fascinating for westerners simply in affording some understanding of this rich artistic tradition, and are certainly enlivening for those philosophers not used to seeing Croce applied to Kathak dance! It must be said, however, that unless one has some familiarity with these particular arts (not to mention knowledge of Sanskrit), they are not always especially illuminating in respect of the philosophical points in question, and in a small way this restricts the book's general utility still further.

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Australasian Journal of Philosophy Symposium on Aesthetics, Vol. 73, No. 2, June 1995. Edited by STEPHEN DAVIES.

THIS SPECIAL issue of the *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* is remarkable in several respects. That it exists at all is a mark of how far analytic aesthetics has come. As Stephen Davies remarks, the journal previously averaged one aesthetics article per decade in its seventy year history. Of course, the nature of the journal is analytic and aesthetics was often trivialized by analytic philosophers because it was thought to be an area of mere casuistry. Substantive issues were grappled with in the philosophy of language and first principles merely applied to the philosophy of art. Hence aesthetics was held to be of little intrinsic philosophical interest.

But aesthetics is no longer a poor cousin in analytic philosophy, hence this special issue and the philosophical insight of its contributors. The ten articles are rigorous, focused and attend with discrimination to the phenomenological complexities of the artistic genres, forms and media discussed. The theme of the issue concerns what can be learnt from art: a protean issue undergoing a strong revival in analytic aesthetics. It is difficult in a short review to do justice to each contribution, so I shall highlight certain pieces and briefly mention the rest. The articles that stand out are by Jerrold Levinson, Jenefer Robinson, Peter Lamarque, Gregory Currie, and Susan L. Feagin.

Levinson's 'Messages in Art' elucidates key points concerning artworks which seek to convey a message. Firstly, we should recognize that such works are not straightforward assertions but framed in terms of pretence. To appreciate a work's message, not necessarily co-extensive with what its creator intended, one must apprehend what the artist saliently believed, her intent, the work's context, and its public reception. Moreover, the artist may be responsible for both unintended meanings and misreadings of the work's message: hence artists cannot both claim credit as artistic *agents provocateurs* whilst simultaneously exonerating themselves from resulting criticism.

Robinson's '*L'Éducation Sentimentale*' examines how we may learn from novels through our emotional involvement. Her argument rests upon a critique of cognitive theories of emotion: Robinson claims emotion need not involve beliefs at all but merely intentional patterns of salience coupled with physiological responses. Thus reading novels may arouse and shape our emotions in ways which lead to reflection upon our own emotional experiences and their significance. Furthermore, as suggested by Edith Wharton's *The Reef*, a novel may itself show us how emotions can be educative.

Lamarque's 'Tragedy and Moral Value' defends a form of humanism distinct from the idea that tragedy's value lies in our resultant moral responses. For Lamarque tragedy's value lies in its artistic presentation of an imaginatively worked out moral vision. Hence artistic value concerns

the distinct mode of presentation in tragedy rather than any derivable 'moral lesson' or an audience's moral improvement. It is the fictive and literary dimensions which repay a certain kind of attention to tragedy and give rise to its artistic value. A work's moral dimension is relevant only where it is exploited for literary value through the tension between our internal and external viewpoints upon the work.

Currie's 'The Moral Psychology of Fiction' focuses upon how fictions can, through our imaginative engagement with them, test, revise and deepen our normative commitments. Currie, with reference to mental simulation theory, suggests that our imaginative engagement with fiction is significant for moral learning: it can tell us something about what experiencing certain situations may be like and how we might respond to them. Hence Plato's worry about art. For the imaginative vivacity of art, and the contemplation of mere possibilities, may be conflated with belief, causing us to revise our commitments without rational foundation.

Feagin's 'Paintings and their Places' suggests that the very nature of paintings depends not just upon what they depict and their aesthetic qualities but the spatiopsychological relationships in which we stand to them. For example, once altarpieces are removed from churches to art galleries they do not merely look different but the nature of what they depict and how they should be understood becomes etiolated. They are reduced to merely aesthetic objects rather than symbols of, and thus substitutes for, objects of religious devotion which may reinforce and extend our religious practice.

There are many places one might take issue with the above claims: that reflects their interest and richly suggestive nature. The remaining articles are by no means unrewarding, and include T. J. Diffey on learning from art, Irmay Barwell on gender implications in storytelling, Göran Hermerén on understanding music, and Richard Shusterman's esoteric piece on Goodman, rap, and pragmatism. Only David Novitz's piece on messages in and through art, suggestive though it is, seems on the perfunctory side. One note of regret for this reader is the fact that Stephen Davies, as editor of the issue, did not

himself contribute to it. Still, especially in this age of academic self promotion, such modesty is a virtue.

If any one theme emerges from this special issue it is the resurgence of interest in and defence of humanistic concerns with art. Such a development is to be welcomed, and perhaps analytic aesthetics, given the way it has developed, is best placed to defend the distinctive and significant values of art. For such a defence is surely needed in the face of the critical sophistry and nihilism that threatens the humanities. Indeed, now that the *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* has finally recognised the substantive nature of philosophical aesthetics, perhaps *Mind* might follow suit.

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The Independent Group. Modernism and Mass Culture in Britain, 1945-59. By ANNE MASSEY. Manchester U.P. 1995. pp. 160. 50 b&w plates, biblio. £35.00 clothbound; £15.99 paperbound.

ATTEMPTING SERIOUS academic study of the Independent Group is problematic. Comprising artists, architects, and critics who formed an unofficial subgroup of the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, it was active intermittently and only briefly (1952-1956), however, its subsequent effects upon art and culture in Britain and beyond have been profound. It left a variety of traces in *ICA Bulletin* and prospectuses, and, particularly, in contemporaneous and later writings by its membership. Crucially, though, negligible records were kept of the substance of its meetings, and so its history must be reconstructed from retrospective publications, survivors' reminiscences, and, chiefly, assumptions that IG members' contemporaneous writings accurately reflected issues they pressed in their discussions. A combination of hazy history and eulogistic, delayed recognition has unsurprisingly stimulated the IG's mythologizing, and it is this that Massey has wished to pare away in order to define and contextualize the Group's achievements.

One of the most important of its predisposing concerns was the politicization of popular culture evident in the Festival of Britain. This was a transparent attempt to harness a contrived sense of national identity to the task of reconstruction, by such means as an undemanding lyricism in the visual arts and, in architecture and design, a sort of modernism in national dress. Massey suggests that a shared disliking of this fabricated culture was one of the factors which brought together the likes of Lawrence Alloway, Reyner Banham, Richard Hamilton, Nigel Henderson, John McHale, Eduardo Paolozzi, Alison Smithson and, Peter Smithson, and which prompted activities later interpreted as their recognition of authentic mass culture. Another object of concern identified by Massey was the art establishment's promotion of high culture, in the form of European modernism, which constituted the purview of the ICA itself. Thus the implication of Massey's argument is that the IG was in effect an entryist association dedicated to subverting certain of the ICA's founding objectives and to replacing them with matters of more vital concern to a rising generation of artists, architects and critics, at least two of whom (Alloway and Banham) were already conscious of a mission to disseminate. And the essence of what they were working towards, she concludes, was a notion of mass culture determined by designers' and producers' sensitivity towards the preferences and fantasies of informed and discriminating consumers.

This is where contradiction and ambiguity in the subject matter begin to corrode analysis. Massey is unavoidably vague about some of the matters the IG thought should inform consumption. She is relatively secure with American pulp literature, cinema publicity, and ads for food, fashion, cars, and home & garden equipment and furniture, because these exemplified a field of rich intercommunication between producers and popular market. But interests in cybernetics, physiology of the brain, semiotics, and so on—all aspects of the IG's panoply of essential knowledge at mid-century—are only really explicable as essential knowledge for producers, enabling them to reflect on the market as opposed to participating in symbiotic exchange.

What is thus presented is an inconsistent scheme involving producers of culture possessing privileged knowledge, responding to the wishes, as conveyed through consumption, of the masses whose knowledge derives from ubiquitous (and therefore lowest common denominator) sources. Massey takes at face value IG assumptions that a diet of science fiction and consumer durables advertising would contain high grade scientific and technological information, however tacit, and that this would penetrate the culture at large. In this regard she exploits certain IG members' professed working class credentials (if they were receptive to such signification, then everyone would be potentially receptive), though in another context she questions the humble origins of key members of the Group and posits instead the vague notion of wartime experience as a surrogate for working class experience. The book is in fact characterized by such tactical argument; instead of strategic discussion there is the mantra that the IG was engaged in 'reworking modernism'.

A detailed discussion of 'reworking modernism' would have been a welcome addition to the book, given the intriguing facts that Duchampian theory figured large in Hamilton's later work, Alison and Peter Smithson continued to address Miesian and Corbusian principles in their architecture, and Banham wrote his celebrated enlargement of modernist ideology, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (1960), assimilating original analyses of Futurism, Loos, Wright, and de Stijl to the standard, Pevsnerian model of interpretation. Massey mentions such matters without exploring their ramifications, suggesting that the IG took an interest in previously neglected aspects of modernism (for example, Dada) which extended the modernist canon and demanded revised critiques. But she is sketchy on the radical reappraisal. Only once does she proceed beyond hypothesizing, but even here her evidence is inconclusive. She refutes the conventional causal link between the IG's interest in popular culture and the rise of British Pop Art. This proposal is based on observations that the first claims for originating influence were made chiefly by Alloway and in substantial retrospect; that is, after Pop Art itself had become recognized

and historicized. Massey regards this as self-interested mythologization for which, however, she presents little more than circumstantial evidence.

Much more questionable, though, are an astonishing remark and two examples of serious academic neglect. First the remark, which occurs as early as page one: 'During the 1930s modernism came to be increasingly identified with the left, with the rise of Fascism in Europe and the concurrent derision of "Degenerate Art".' If Massey is misguided enough to believe this (in built contradiction and all), it may explain her evident conviction that the project to 'rework modernism' requires no qualification. The two examples of academic neglect are Massey's compliance with the disparaging of Herbert Read and Richard Hoggart. She demonstrates willingness to take IG members to task when it suits her purposes (refutation of their claims to working class origins and to have initiated Pop Art) but leaves unchecked derogatory references to these two men.

In the case of Read, who was President of the ICA, she concurs with the IG's perception of him as representing elitist modernism and committed to a universal principle of beauty, evident in the art of all periods and cultures, but only if assimilable to the high art aesthetics of the prewar avant-garde. Had Massey wished to investigate the legitimacy of this view, she would have found much to bring it into question in Read's advocacy of the social basis of authentic art, and of an organicist creative principle needed, for example, to humanize industrial production. Instead she prefers a caricature Read lacking purchase on the postwar technological reality, opposing an IG perception of reality occasioned by wartime experiences. This is a great disservice to Read, for minimal research would have revealed that the foundations of his aversion for a mechanical aesthetic (a principal disagreement with the IG) lay in his wartime experiences of mechanized combat on the Somme, and in a lifetime of grieving for his decimated and brutalized generation. However, it suits Massey's purpose to personalize in Read a fictionalized modernism in paramount need of 'reworking'. Her linking Read to a discredited modernism 'identified' with

Fascism is a disgrace to this proud anarchist and defender of the *victims* of Entartete Kunst.

Similarly, Massey offers no check on Banham's deriding of Hoggart's vision of working class culture. Hoggart is critic of both an establishment view of mass culture and of the sort of nostalgic stereotyping of working class culture evident in the Festival of Britain. Criticism of the latter was sympathetic to IG concerns, but Hoggart's vivid encapsulation of *authentic* working class values, including thrift, material resourcefulness, and lifestyle uncomplicated by many goods, posed a serious challenge to Banham's view of a mass culture shaped by consumerism. It has suited Massey to foreground Banham's principle, and so his criticisms of Hoggart have been reported without qualification.

This book bears all the signs of having been published in haste. Its dissociation of the IG and Pop Art will ensure attention, but what is the point of this proposal if the obvious has had to be obscured? Figurative artists in the early 1950s were defensive about their work in an age of heroic American abstraction, and were obliged to construct strategies for their creative intentionality in terms that would stand comparison to critiques and programmes emanating from New York. Shouldn't study of the IG begin with this rather than notions of 'reworking' a modernism that must be drastically fictionalized in order to present it as a candidate for such attention?

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Aristotle's POETICS. Edited and translated by S. HALLIWELL. *Longinus's ON THE SUBLIME*. Trans. by W. H. FYFE, revised by D. RUSSELL. *Demetrius' ON STYLE*. Edited and translated by D. C. INNES, based on W. RHYS ROBERTS, Loeb Classical Library. Harvard U.P. 1995. £11.50.

THIS RE-EDITION cum revision of the three most seminal ancient Greek treatises in the aesthetics of literature is much to be welcomed. Together with a new translation of Aristotle's *Poetics* by Stephen Halliwell, it provides a spruced up version of

W. H. Fyfe's spirited rendering of *On the Sublime*, and a comprehensive revision of W. Rhys Roberts' 1927 edition and translation of *On Style*. In all three cases new introductions and generous annotations bring the reader up to date with recent scholarship. At £11.50, this is a bargain which should, one hopes, cast a shadow on the comparatively lacklustre (although serviceable, of course) volume of *Classical Literary Criticism* in Penguin Classics.

Stephen Halliwell has arguably done more than anyone this century to rejuvenate debates on Aristotle's *Poetics* and to undermine the defeatist opinion that it is more trouble than it is worth. As well as a monograph and a commentary, he has, to date, done two translations of it. The second, produced for the present volume, succeeds in being generally crisper, nervier, and closer to the original than the 1987 version (Duckworth). More particularly, Halliwell has completely overhauled and refined his rendering of the ethically charged concepts which are central to Aristotle's account of tragedy. Thus 'spoudaios' has become 'elevated' (as opposed to 'serious'), 'epieikes' 'decent' (instead of 'good'), 'mochēros' 'depraved' (no longer 'wicked'), and 'phaulos' 'base' (for 'bad'). Most boldly of all, he has done away with the bet-hedging 'fallibility' for the notoriously obscure concept of 'hamartia' and come clean with 'error'. This reinforces the currently favoured interpretation of tragic *hamartia* as referring to an event in the life of the tragic hero rather than, as the Victorians and their successors saw it, a dispositional, moral flaw in his character. *Mimēsis* is now consistently left untranslated, a technical term in its own right, unencumbered with the accretions of either 'imitation' or 'representation'. Lastly, and presumably because, in the matter of political correctness, Aristotle needs all the help he can get, Halliwell has substituted 'person' for 'man', even when the Greek text has 'anēr'. In his editorial role, Halliwell has generally pursued a non-interventionist policy, excising as little as possible and favouring a clean text with a minimum of editorial brackets to signal the omission of letters, syllables, or words in the ms.

Since the seventeenth century the ancient treatise *On The Sublime* has provided the *terminus*

a quo for theoretical inquiries into the grand style. Although this reason alone would have assured it a place in the history of literary criticism, its elegant and, at times, pungent style ('Tumours are bad things whether in books or bodies', 3.4) and the mystery of its origins have added to its renown. Long ascribed to Cassius Longinus, a third century Neoplatonist who taught Porphyry, it is now generally thought to be the work of an anonymous author who flourished in the mid-to-late first century AD. His definition of the sublime in literature as 'consummate excellence and distinction of language' capable of transporting an audience out of themselves (*ekstasis*, 1.3-4) probably accounts for the Neoplatonist attribution. Indeed, the author's valorization of the experience of transcending, through contact with, for example, literary genius, such (human) limitations as hinder our 'unconquerable passion for whatever is great and more divine than ourselves' (35.2) likewise appears to announce Plotinus. Literary criticism, however, is the author's main concern and his analysis of the variously 'sublime' styles of Homer, Sappho, Plato, and Demosthenes provides one of the pleasures of reading his book. Donald Russell has revised the text and preserved the panache of W. H. Fyfe's translation even where he had to correct or modernize it (his substitution of 'sophisticated' for 'unconscionable' in 17.1 is characteristic).

On Style, a manual dating probably from the end of the second century BC, composed by a certain Demetrius who was not of Phaleron, is a mine of information on Hellenistic literary taste and principles. Plainly written and committed to the view that usage is teacher and arbiter (*kanon*) in most stylistic matters, it makes little attempt at theory. Most of the book is taken up with an analysis of four styles (the grand, elegant, plain, and forceful), together with their defective counterparts, and the tone is mostly magisterial and prescriptive. The author's general indebtedness to Aristotle, which shines through his choice of examples and authorities, does not prevent him from occasionally departing from strict Peripatetic lines. Thus his account of the enthymeme as an 'incomplete' (*ateles*) syllogism probably testifies, as Burnyeat *et al.* have recently argued, to a Stoic

amendment to the classic definition of it in the *Prior Analytics*, 70a10. Demetrius' regard for usage does not prevent him from recognizing (78ff.), unlike Aristotle, that habit deprives metaphors of their ornamental, as opposed to their cognitive, dimension. In her careful re-edition, Doreen Innes has accepted readings from a fourteenth century manuscript where Roberts, the previous editor in the series, had preferred the conjectures of scholars. She has also done Demetrius the favour of substituting clear and austere language for Roberts' circumlocutions and occasional wordiness.

The volume as a whole succeeds in meeting both the needs of non-classically trained readers and the requirements of scholars. For that reason it cannot be recommended too warmly.

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Feminism and Tradition in Aesthetics. Edited by PEGGY ZBGLIN BRAND and CAROLYN KORSMEYER. Pennsylvania State U.P. 1995. pp. 486. £17.95 paperback.

TO STATE the obvious: feminism has a political as well as an intellectual aspect and each of these aspects has its own range of perceptions. In his foreword to this collection of papers Arthur C. Danto reminds us that academic women are affected by the two aspects at once and that, additionally, women philosophers working in the context of developments in feminism since the 1960s have been sharply aware of a further tension: that between, on the one hand, the mass of theory emanating from French thinkers such as Foucault and Derrida, and, on the other, the practices deriving from the canon of western philosophy—those traditional texts that are, as Danto remarks, 'a kind of gymnasium for the development of philosophical muscles' (p. xiv). The main emphasis of *Feminism and Tradition in Aesthetics* is on the feminist departure from tradition. The fact that the contributors are drawn from several disciplines reflects the editors' recognition of the diversity of feminist scholarship and of the extensive purview of

aesthetics

About half of these essays were previously published as a special issue of the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (Fall, 1990). They are arranged in groups, each of which is prefaced by a review of its subject matter and followed by a substantial bibliography. They exhibit a wide variety of attitudes and, cumulatively, provide the reader with a broad overview of feminist approaches to philosophy, aesthetics, and feminism. There is not space here to do more than summarize and comment briefly on some of the themes treated.

Analyses of beauty and sublimity in Part I, 'Gender and Eighteenth Century Aesthetic Theory', are largely concerned to refine the crude dichotomy in which 'beauty is feminized while sublimity is ascribed masculine traits' (Introduction to Part I, unpaginated). It is argued, for example, that the yielding passivity traditionally deemed properly characteristic of the female is also required to experience sublimity, and recognition of this undermines any attempt at sharp gender bifurcation. Similarly, there can be no neat gender categorizations of views that regard the female as representative of nature, wildness, and irrationality while at the same time seeing her as the source of domestic order, civility, and sociability. This sort of textual study is very welcome.

The papers in Part II, 'Aesthetic Responses: Subjective Differences and the Challenge to Traditional Theories of Appreciation', work to question the notion of a neutral perceiver or appreciator of art and the characterization of aesthetic experience as disinterested and contemplative. Of course, such challenges are not new, but I had some troubled moments in this Part and in Part III ('Feminist Art and the refusal of Aesthetic Value'). In a feminist aesthetic, is just any response at all to a work of art to be counted as aesthetic? Can I really go along with the view that a feminist aesthetic should attribute value (presumably aesthetic value) to the works of women artists because they diverge from the white, male viewpoint? (p.267). I would certainly be eager to register political or social or awareness-raising elements in such works, but I am not inclined, without considerable discussion,

to assign aesthetic value to them on those grounds, just as I am not prepared to withdraw aesthetic approbation from a work exhibiting or revealing patriarchal elements. It is possible to like a painting for its visual qualities and for its capacity to transport one vividly to another culture or era or sensibility, and at the same time perceive and regret certain attitudes or impositions embodied in it.

Part IV, 'Feminism and the Interpretation of Artworks', focuses on feminist revisions of traditional histories and interpretations of art, identifying patriarchy and reassessing received meanings. It examines the idea and construction of a canon and the possibility of a range of interpretations for any given work. A scholarly and perceptive essay examines some of Leonardo da Vinci's paintings of women and convincingly upholds the claim that 'he acknowledged and symbolised in positive terms a realm of female power' (p. 348).

The essays in Part V, 'Feminism and Aesthetics: Directions for the Future', were riveting to read because they endeavour to confront some of the urgent questions that loom with epiphenomenal (though often unacknowledged) presence over almost every paragraph in the earlier parts. These are questions about the rejection by many feminist writers of the analytical methods of much traditional philosophy, questions about the validity and intelligibility of what does and could replace analytical methods, questions about separatism, oppositionism, and pluralism in feminism, about what exactly is meant by 'feminism' and 'feminist aesthetic', and about what might serve as foundational for a feminist aesthetic that espouses only an 'ironic' use of many traditional concepts because they are judged part of the vocabulary of oppression. I was extremely grateful for the papers in this part because they offered me many new thoughts to think. But the thought that there might be feminist and, presumably, masculinist, philosophies is not a palatable one. So far, I remain convinced that feminism is and should be a predominantly political force that works by both intellectual and activist means, first, to make it clear that in the past women have been unwarrantably and unfairly put down in many

kinds of ways, and second, to bring about appropriate reform. It would be an advance, in my view, to cease genderizing absolutely every thing and every situation. We are as much in need of a new meta-feminism as of a new meta-philosophy, and I look forward to the construction of both.

Diané Collinson

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Prosthesis. By DAVID WILLIS. Stanford U.P. 1995. pp. 350/255. £12.95.

ON THE occasion of a lecture in Geneva, the author's leg is in plaster. As he takes up his position behind the lectern, there is an awkward moment—he is not sure what to do with his crutches. He will remember that moment as one of a lifetime of events dealing with prosthetic devices, because this is his *idée fixe*. It is the subject of the book: prostheses, both real and literary, wooden legs, crutches, and walking sticks; and those parentheses, addenda, and various linguistic contrivances that aid and abet the life of the text.

At the centre of the book, and interwoven in both poetic and analytical musings about Virgil, Freud, Derrida, Condor, Roussel, Greenaway, Paré, and Gibson, lies a seam of autobiographical fragments: principally, the story of the author's father. This contributes a vital link between the author and his reader. Of all the topics broached, this is the one that matters. No amount of deconstruction, re-arrangement, replacement, insertion, and quotation can diminish the concern and identification with the life of the cripple with whom he maintains a loving, if sometimes painful relationship.

We meet the father as he is washing dishes, standing awkwardly at the sink and wincing from phantom pains that shoot up his truncated leg. The dish-washing is interspersed with quotations in French and Latin. When son asks father to repeat a quotation from the *Aeneid* about the gallop of four-hooved horses across a dusty plain he is at first unaware of the irony, but he will never forget it. Embarrassment and pain are meshed like the wooden leg and the flesh, like the

meaning of a text with its linguistic material.

The story of the father's life—in Hamilton, New Zealand—is told in fragments throughout the book. In 1949, at the age of 18, he develops a tumour in his left leg. The leg is amputated at mid-thigh and a replacement, part metal and part wood, is provided by the Artificial Limb Factory. A stumpsock is interposed where metal joins flesh, and the metallic knee further down can be bent and straightened with the aid of a lever reached through the trouser leg. The wooden leg is functional. It allows the father to lead a working family life, to raise four children, to maintain for thirty years his position as a secretary/accountant in a furniture store, and to drive a specially adapted car.

'Paternal paraphernalia', as the author calls it, also includes a crutch with a rubber foot and a walking stick. The crutch is used when there is no time to fasten the leg to the stump. The walking stick is a constant companion. During the night, father's wooden leg stands in the corner of the parents' bedroom, wearing one trouser leg while the other trails on the floor. Its presence reverberates around the house and invades the son's sleeping and waking hours. The existence of this artifact becomes an obsession. Concomitant suffering and infirmity, replacement, contrivance, and addition insinuate themselves into the nine chapters of the book. When the son leaves home at the age of 18, he thinks of it as the age when his father's leg was amputated. Some twelve years later, when he starts work on what will finally be gathered within the covers of this volume, the title, *Prosthesis*, seems inevitable. The prosthetic device, the author proposes, has a multiplicity of roles. 'The wooden leg can easily be read as the pretext for all manner of digressions as well as the one solid piece of evidence that keeps all this together.'

And so the author opens the prosthetic window and through it looks at a painting by Charles Conder *A Holiday at Mentone*, 1888. In this quiet scene on the beach, he sees mutilation everywhere: impaled bodies, peg limbs, amputations, decapitations. The figures on the beach and the pier bisect the picture space like sharp instruments. He digresses, and describes a walk down to the beach with his father. He will look after father's walking

equipment as he plunges into the sea for a swim.

Simulation is the prosthetic reality of William Gibson's cyberspace; in the world of Freud it is his dental plate; for Derrida there are philological addenda and linguistic replacements. In Greenaway, it is the contrivance of situations. For Paré it is the real world of prosthetic instrumentation and ligature, and for Raymond Roussel it is the narcotics that allow him to furnish his imaginary world with a wondrous array of props and automata. For the writer, prosthesis is a mirror of the writing practice with man attached to a writing machine—the word processor.

The book opens with a sentence, or at least with a text that lies between an empty space and a full stop, of 57 lines. The end, 318 pages later, is a dedication to the reader, terminating with three question marks. Each of these is a quotation; the final one, lacking its closing parenthesis, refers to an uncorrected text of Derrida. But the question marks do not demand answers. Nor does the book, with its focus on prosthesis, concern itself with the necessary replacements for what is missing. Rather, it is a breathless search for new meanings in familiar texts, using the idea of prosthesis, like a poetic canon, to renew well-trodden paths.

JASIA REICHARDT

London

Art as Language: Wittgenstein, Meaning and Aesthetic Theory By G. L. HAGBERG. Cornell U.P. 1995. pp. xii + 196. No price given.

HAGBERG'S BOOK is an attempt to relate Wittgenstein's work in philosophy of language and mind to some influential aesthetic theories—notably those of Langer, Collingwood, Ducas, Danto, Dickie, and Margolis. Hagberg moves from theories of artistic expression in the early chapters, relating expression in speech to expression in art, through artistic intention, concluding with the nature of art and the ontology of art-objects.

The most interesting discussions concern artistic intention (ch. 4) and Danto's 'aesthetics of

indiscernables' (ch. 7). On the latter, Hagberg interestingly argues that Danto, in his apparently radical artworld account, 'perhaps unwittingly, both concealed and preserved a good deal of the [pre-Wittgensteinian] ways of thinking' (p. 136). I think Hagberg is correct, and his objections to Danto's 'Gallery of Indiscernibles' thought-experiment, with its roots in a possible misunderstanding of Wittgenstein's account of action, have some force. As Hagberg writes, '[Danto's] way of putting the matter pretends that "bodily movement" is not itself a description that has its use within rather specific meaning-generating contexts. It pretends...that the brute perception of the movement comes first and that its descriptive interpretation follows ... "mere [real] thing" is no more descriptively inert a phrase than "bodily movement";' in the way that Danto's thought-experiment assumes it is (p. 149).

I think this is right, and Hagberg correctly notes the 'theoretical' nature of Danto's admiration for readymades (p. 146). Unfortunately, here as elsewhere, Hagberg's objections are not very developed, as they surely need to be, and he rarely gives his opponents' views a proper run for their money. He regards Dickie's institutional development of Danto as viciously circular, since it ignores the need for an answer to the question 'Why is one artifact and not another put forward as a candidate?' (p. 152). (Danto makes the same point in *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*.) Hagberg, thinking of the *Polish Rider* in contrast to some ordinary household objects, maintains that the answer to the question must be 'Because that is a masterpiece painting, a true work of art, and those squalid objects are not'. But the claim of the institutional theory, surely, is that there are no specifiable conditions in terms of which the question could be answered, and so it should be rejected. So thus far we simply have a stand-off.

Hagberg maintains that the general strategy of the artworld account, rather than being a development of a Wittgensteinian family resemblance view, involves a pre-Wittgensteinian search for necessary and sufficient conditions for art-hood. This seems a continuation of his earlier misunderstanding. Part of Hagberg's error here

seems to involve taking the institutional theory as trying to answer a sceptical question. He writes, 'the strategy of determining a necessary and sufficient condition presupposes that...far more objects are precariously situated on the controversial edge of art, than is the case' (p. 154). He claims that the assumption that every work of artefact acknowledged as an artwork has that status conferred on it by an appropriately empowered representative, runs counter to Wittgenstein's view of certainty as implying that reasons at some point give out. Given what I have said above, these seem bizarre criticisms to make. I would argue, however, that the artworld account implicitly requires an artworld of works with traditional aesthetic properties, on the existence of which the practice of admitting readymades is parasitic.

I have focused on what I think is the best chapter in the book; the chapter on artistic intention is also useful, though it is subject to Hagberg's unfortunate habit of challenging the least plausible version of his opponent's account. It explores the 'two-entity' assumption—'artist's intention' and 'art-work'—behind the New Critics' analysis of an 'intentional fallacy'. Most other chapters fall some way short of these. That on Collingwood is a prosaic survey of the deficiencies of aesthetic idealism. Some objections cited are beside the point, for instance the curious example of the jazz performance, which forgets that jazz simply does not, as a rule, adhere to the work-concept (p. 45—Lydia Goehr's critique of that concept in *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) could have been referred to here and elsewhere). Wollheim's exemplary, sympathetic but ultimately dismissive critique 'On An Alleged Inconsistency in Collingwood's Aesthetic' (in M. Krausz (ed.), *Critical Essays on the Philosophy of R.G. Collingwood* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972)) surely says all that needs to be said on the aesthetics of this overrated thinker.

Many chapters have been published separately in some form, including in *The British Journal of Aesthetics* and *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, and they do not add up to a sustained thesis in anything other than a rather superficial way—viz. Wittgenstein is right and his views have

been neglected by contemporary aestheticians. Hagberg's historical understanding is crude: before the mid-century Wittgensteinian 'revolution' were the 'old days' when Lockean theories of meaning and perceptual atomism held sway—and that's about it. Much of the book consists simply of outlines of the views of the writers mentioned above, with plentiful quotation—for instance, over half of the first chapter is simply an outline of Langer's account of artistic expression. Hagberg's own analyses, as I have said, are insufficiently developed. A disappointing book.

ANDY HAMILTON

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Irish Art 1830–1990. By BRIAN FALLON. Appletree Press 1994. pp. 208 + 35 b&w and 37 colour illustrations. No price given.

THIS BOOK is a useful survey of the development of Irish art over the last century and a half. It is well illustrated, attractive to the eye, and will no doubt appeal to the general reader and to schools. Yet, despite its utility, it has deficiencies which limit its use. The author's style is dogmatic and he is prone to make sweeping generalizations, as, for example, when he states (with accuracy, and good intention) that Irish art is known only to 'a minority of scholars and cognoscenti, museum curators and a handful of salesroom addicts'. But he is quite wrong to say that 'even these few rarely have any overall view...of Irish art and its...development. Its entire history and pedigree are elements which they have never considered. Their knowledge, as a rule, is piecemeal and arbitrary, they know isolated names, certain individual works, but lack any overall art-historical context in which to fit them' (p. 11). Such arrogance is misplaced, as Fallon's comprehensive bibliography makes plain, and reduces the authority of the text. Besides this, the author's reason for choosing 1830 as his starting point is never clear, unless it is loosely associated with Catholic Emancipation, which came about a year earlier and which changed the future

development of Irish society. A further irritation is the journalistic approach to the text, which too often verges on the anecdotal. For example, describing Daniel Maclise's liaison with Lady Sykes, a popular Regency hostess, Fallon comments that she was 'what used to be called a woman with a history' (p. 32). When used judiciously, such comments can lend atmosphere to our understanding of the social context of the times, but too often they merely give a flippancy to the text.

Structurally the book has an introduction and nine chapters, the discussion being arranged in chronological order. The author's method throughout is to present a narrative description followed by a passage of analysis of selected works by the most important painters. Thus, although a survey, selected material is presented in surprising detail—the discussions on William Mulready, Nathaniel Hone, Sir William Orpen, Harry Clarke, Jack B. Yeats, and Paul Henry in particular stand out—and conveys well the impression of the painters of each period building upon the success of their predecessors. One senses that Fallon is most at ease when discussing the influences of French painting on Irish art during the *fin de siècle* and early years of the twentieth century—this period has received a good deal of in-depth research from Irish art-historians in recent times—although in doing so he is, of course, treading well-worn ground. Within the constraints of space it seems unnecessary to repeat again at such length the well-known saga of the efforts of Sir Hugh Lane—whom Fallon flippantly terms an 'impresario' (p. 60)—to establish a gallery of modern art in Dublin, although Fallon's discussion of the matter does give an insight into Dublin society at the time. The chronological structure is weakened in the later part of the text with two chapters, each a survey and complete in itself, on Irish sculpture and the crafts revival respectively, interspersed between a discussion of the early years of twentieth century Modernism and what is termed 'The Modern Epoch'. In his discussion of early Modernism, which is too narrowly confined to the influence of Cubism, Fallon clings to the adage that Mainie Jellett and Eivie Hone almost single-handedly introduced such influences into

Irish art. While this argument has a certain cogency, nevertheless recent research has shown it to be an unduly narrow reading of events and it ignores the presence of artists who were aware of such movements but shunned them. Also, to say that 'Ireland's late introduction to Modernism was to a large extent the result of its reliance on Britain' (p. 189) has been shown to be untrue, for many Irish artists and patrons, even George Russell (AE) in the late 1890s, Ellen Duncan in the early years of this century, and, not least, Mainie Jellett, were aware of both Modernist developments and their implications before many of their counterparts in Britain. The last chapter, 'The Modern Epoch', covering the most recent developments, is that in which one would expect Fallon to be at his best, for he has been an influential newspaper critic with the *Irish Times* for many years. Yet the period is discussed only in brief outline and lacks much of the analysis of selected works which lends strength to the rest of the text.

Fallon frequently displays a wide erudition in his writing, yet too often his text lacks the incisive direction which a surer scholarship would bring, as, for example, when he compares Mary Swanzy's romanticism with that of the (unknown?—she is not mentioned in Bénézit) Russian, Alexandra Exter, 'who of all the *émigré* artists of the Paris School is nearest to her mentally' (p. 104). Perhaps, even in a survey of this sort, some discussion should have been given to the debate on national identity which informed a good deal of Irish art in the early and mid-years of the twentieth century. Fallon does mention Paul Henry and, more importantly, Sean Keating in this respect, but he is too dismissive of Keating's life-long (if ill-fated) attempt to establish a 'national' art.

As has been said, this book, which is well illustrated with both black and white and colour plates, will be useful to the general reader, but overall it is disappointing, its weaknesses stemming from too assertive a style.

BRIAN KENNEDY

Ulster Museum

Universal Grammar and Narrative Form. By DAVID HERMAN. Duke U.P. 1995. pp. x + 281. £18.95 paperback

THIS is a book about, among other things, narrative theory. Narrative is often taken to be a structure superimposed upon language, a kind of second-order arrangement which gets to work after the usual language rules—phonetic, syntactic, semantic—have done their job. Theory of narrative, in this perspective, is quite different from the other branches of linguistics, and has its own distinctive conceptual apparatus and explanatory scope.

David Herman does not entirely diverge from this style of narrative theory. But he adopts a point of view in which all the features of language contribute to the identity of narrative discourse: it is not that syntax, meaning, and context produce a kind of verbal substance that is then reshaped into narrative, but rather that narrative is the end-product from the very start. Narrative is also a mode of discourse that seems independent of the individual languages that instantiate it. Herman is thus able to conceive of narrative theory as something akin to a universal grammar.

His principal aim in this book, however, is to try to establish a thesis about contemporary history, or culture. The thesis is that narrative practices and experiments in twentieth century literature exemplify the innovations that took place contemporaneously in syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic theory. He illustrates this thesis by drawing parallels between syntactic theory and Joyce's *Sirens* episode, between semantic theory and Kafka's *The Trial*, and between Prague School pragmatics and Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts*. The implication seems to be that there has been a common cultural spirit or resonance, apparent in literature and theory alike, even though both the writers and the theorists may have been only partially aware of what the others were up to.

Joyce's *Sirens* episode can be taken as an illustration of this methodology, and of the character of the book as a whole. The action takes place in the bar of the Ormond Hotel, and involves the barmaids (the sirens), and various persons who drop in to eat, drink, flirt with the barmaids, sing, and swap opinions about music and various topics of the hour. Bloom, who is in

the thick of it, also writes a letter. The episode begins with a two-page list of words and phrases, which are subsequently and repeatedly combined in the construction of the text. The text itself is marked by syntactic and morphological elisions and irregularities, and by an emphasis as much on the sound of language as on its meaning and grammar. Joyce, who took great pleasure in explaining his work in ways that could be neither proved nor disproved, wrote that the episode comprises 'all the eight regular parts of a *figura per canonem*'.

Herman claims that the episode is related to innovations and experiments in philosophy, linguistics, mathematics, logic, and musical theory, concerning what might loosely be called syntax, or at any rate the problem of how elements are combined in meaningful composites. Schönberg is a case in point. One of Schönberg's principles in his twelve-tone compositions was that 'whatever sounds together (harmonies, chords, the result of part-writing) plays its part in expression and the presentation of the musical idea in just the same way as does all that sounds successively (motive, shape, phrase, sentence, melody, etc.)'. Similarly, according to Herman, the elements of language in *Sirens* are structured not just sequentially or horizontally, but also vertically (as in, 'Up the quay went Lionelleopold, naughty Henry with letter for Mady, with sweets of sin with frillies for Raoul with met him pike hoses went Poldy on').

Herman draws further ingenious analogies between *Sirens* and various developments in Tarski, Husserl, Carnap, Chomsky, and Todorov, all of whom dealt in one way or another with problems of logical, grammatical, or narrative sequence and structure—matters which, in a broad kind of way, are roughly 'syntactical'. These provide varying perspectives from which the episode can be understood, but they are all introduced in order to establish the claim that *Sirens* and similar narratives are 'both historically and conceptually interlinked with axiomatic systems and transformational generative grammars' (p. 87).

This treatment of Joyce is characteristic of the book as a whole. Herman searches for analogous affiliations and parallels when he turns to Kafka in

relation to semantic theory and Virginia Woolf in relation to pragmatics. It must be said that his engagement with these texts is inclined to be minimal: just enough to bear out the theoretical claims that he wants to make. On the other hand, his mastery of theory is most impressive; in fact, the density of the theoretical expositions will make the book tough going for anyone who is not familiar with the material, or who, alternatively, is not much interested in it to start with. It is not a work of literary criticism.

There must be some question, however, about how much significance we can read into the parallels that Herman draws between literary and theoretical practices. It seems reasonable to test the claims of theory against the literary evidence, but the suggestion that writers and theorists were involved in similar enterprises of innovation and experiment, even though there was very little contact between them, is one that needs more confirmation. The chief merit of Herman's book lies in its very thorough and comprehensive survey of twentieth century literary theory, as well as of the more fundamental works in philosophy, logic, and linguistics upon which that theory is based. This alone gives it considerable value.

HUGH BREDIN

The Queen's University of Belfast

Semiotics in the Postmodern Age. By FLOYD MERRELL.

Purdue U.P. 1995. pp. 374. No price given.

ONE OF the defining trends of postmodernity has been its search for its own prophets and, completing as it does a trilogy, Floyd Merrell's *Semiotics in the Postmodern Age* suggests Charles Peirce for the candidature. Merrell's ontological position is interesting: the omnipotent observer of modernist science, placed perspectively 'outside' the observed system and able to report with the privilege of objectivity, is replaced by the observer swamped by the frenzy of postmodern semiotic activity. The postmodern semioticians clearly have to get their hands dirty. But the position is still privileged, the hermeneutic circle is unbroken.

Postmodernism is undoubtedly, as Merrell

writes, 'transient, constantly subject to critique and eventual displacement' (p. 121). Postmodernism is also, the range of the possible interpretations of what it is notwithstanding, not without its complexities and contradictions, as well as its sham elements and charlatans, and Merrell is alive to this. Semiotics, on the other hand and despite Eco's crossover appeal, remains a more or less academically embowered speciality while postmodernism has become the required fashion statement of millenarian pop philosophy. Whether or not postmodernism is latterly seen as no more than the hypertonic spasms of modernism in its death throes remains to be seen. In the meantime the centre cannot hold, and postmodernism is the context into which philosophy's narrative must be placed. Merrell, therefore, sets out to show that Peirce is quite as decent as postmodernism requires.

Peirce's credentials are impeccable. Merrell shows how the Cartesian description of the universe as mechanistic goes from being metaphor to being science, obeying the rules of Peircean sign degeneracy. Also, quite apart from any postmodernist tendencies before the letter, the Peircean categories provide one more powerful objection to a cornerstone of the Enlightenment edifice, the Cartesian *cogito*, the Archimedean point around which the project of modernism turns. The *cogito* is, notoriously, a linguistically staged event. Descartes states this clearly. The stratum which appears in the field of language with the introduction of Peirce's tripartite system does not allow this event to be staged. Descartes' indubitable first point would not be available until the third Peircean stage, it would have nothing to declare and would remain silent, a null philosophical value.

This said, Peirce was a chemist, and there are scientific elements at play in his work. Phanerons and sign degeneracy weave in and out of the sign stream. Merrell too casts scientists in strong roles throughout his skilled dissection of the modern breed of scientific sign. But there are times too when to be involved with Peirce seems almost to force his intellectual assessor into the language of alchemy. 'The sign of Thirdness', Merrell writes, '—the symbol—is the only sign in the full sense of the term' (p. 100) could be Bruno

or John Dee. This is far from being an objection; the philosophers of the Renaissance have been excluded by western rationalism with its Whiggish preferences when in fact they have much to contribute to the discussion of the semiotically real. And this is a possibility Merrell expresses by showing Peircean semiotics to be not a dry analysis of static fields but a possible retelling of the narrative of history. Merrell emphasizes a whiff of the occultation of reality—a perceived distortion of experience which science has always sought to avoid—which clings lightly to Peirce. Peirce is presented as Wittgensteinian in the sense that a slight mysticality attended some of the Austrian's work.

So, science is shown to be an occlusion of reality, which is a charge more usually, since Plato, levelled at art. And science's ambassador here is AI, the ethics and consequences of which are returned to by Merrell. Physics detains him but AI provokes him, and thus for reasons of a humanism which is once again of the Renaissance. The homunculi of the modern AI programme are criticised for a lack of human elements. The particular traits singled out are the usual suspects, but this criticism of AI is important enough not to require originality but rather emphasis. Merrell rightly exposes the possible range of achievements of AI in its current guise. 'Computer thought', he writes, 'knows only particulars. At its most precise behaviour, it must generate signs as disconnected atoms; it can hardly abstract, generalise, think on its own' (p. 292). 'The process of data handling which will stand proxy for thought in the AI model is shown to be "overwhelmingly nominalistic" (ibid.). But this is only a phase for AI; the more important it is allowed to become for investment brokerage by the instantaneous and massive empowerment of the information user of the fiscal future, the more research will be encouraged to speed up its exponential development. If only to serve profit margins, the mode of 'thought' of the new systems-generated models will replace the merely human. The type of human thought, syndromic and wonderful though it undeniably is, will have only a limited use-value in the advance of AI because the truth is that there has been no postmodernism at all but a long, oppressive

twilight of modernism.

Semiotics in the Postmodern Age certainly forces a reassessment of Peircean semiotics at the end of a century in which Flaubert's fears have been realised and we have too many things and not enough forms. Baudrillard (and even Warhol) are soft targets, though, Baudrillard is not really working in academia but at the sharp end of the entertainment business and Warhol is much maligned when he actually helped to expose the contemporary and Apollonian obsession with surface appeal. That aside, the Peircean adventure is shown to be not a dull retread of sign analysis but, in Peirce's words, 'a dialogue between the different phases of the ego—so that, being dialogical, it is essentially composed of signs, as its matter, in the sense in which a game of chess has the chessmen as its matter' (p. 166).

MARK GULLICK

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Masks of Difference: Cultural Representation in Literature, Anthropology and Art By DAVID RICHARDS. Cambridge UP 1994. pp. 348. £13.95.

THE NEW Cambridge Cultural Margins series seeks to 'investigate the complex cultural zone within and through which dominant and minority societies interact and negotiate their differences'. *Masks of Difference* is the second book in the series and follows this remit. David Richards explores complex cultural depictions of both colonizer and colonized in a wide range of different art forms. Indeed, as with Jonathan Sawday's *The Body Emblazoned*, his interdisciplinary range of reference is one of the strengths of the book. Richards is able to discuss, for example, anthropological writing, eighteenth century novels and modernist painting with equal ease. (It is perhaps unfortunate that the reproductions of paintings he discusses are not of a high quality, the black and white plates are frustrating, especially in relation to his discussion of Matisse and colour.)

The book does not offer a unified, coherent history, but rather works by moving from case

study to case study, each chosen from a specific geographical and chronological location. He begins with a detailed analysis of Renaissance painting and monster-books, and examines the 'wildman' or 'savage' as a trope of European representation of other peoples. The text then moves on to deal with accounts of Florida at the end of the sixteenth century, Surinam in the eighteenth century, and Scotland in the nineteenth century. Richards explores the representations of the colonized and the colonizers by Aphra Behn and Walter Scott, amongst many others. These are perhaps the least rewarding sections of the book, as Richard's argument is, on first reading, unclear, seeming to offer only a discontinuous exposition. However, as Richards approaches the twentieth century, he initiates a persuasive argument in his account of the origins of anthropology and its relationship with other forms of representation. He is at his most lucid in his discussion of the new work in anthropology, best exemplified by Geertz and Clifford, in relation to *Matsigen* and a discussion of subjectivity.

Richards argues convincingly that representation of cultural difference in anthropology, literature, and art does not simply or exclusively carry 'the same message endlessly repeated in different ... misrepresentations through which power is legitimated, transfigured and mis-recognised' (pp. 289-290). Rather, at the same time as enforcing colonial power, these representations also show 'a recurrent and insistent note of dissent from that "power"' (p. 290). Richards shows how the images fashioned by the colonizers of both colonized and colonizer are 'extremely partial, temporary, fragmentary and fragile' (p. 290). To support this idea, Richards offers a series of double readings. Each text he selects is countered and read in comparison with another contemporary text, or with a different version of itself.

For example, Richards contrasts the two-volume *A Narrative of a Five Years Expedition ... in Surinam* of John Stedman, published in 1796, with engravings by Blake and others, with Stedman's own *Journal*, only published in 1962. 'Desperate Jack' Stedman, soldier for the Dutch in Surinam, drinker, gambler, and rake, rewrote, bowdlerized,

and reordered his journal in the mould of a novel. Richards picks up on the discrepancies in the transition between the two genres. Captain John Stedman is upstanding, happy to describe the racial differences between the peoples of Surinam and the Europeans in an orderly and scientific manner, to reflect on European superiority, and to gloss over the many cruelties of empire. 'Desperate Jack' is, on the one hand, explicit and savage about the treatment of slaves, and, on the other, aware of his own implicit role in the colony's administration. The racial differences which Captain John makes so much of are much less clear, if they exist at all, for 'Desperate Jack'. In relation to his mistress/slave Joanna, Captain John Stedman speaks the language of love and romance in *A Narrative*, 'Desperate Jack' talks the language of the brothel and the slave market. In this way, Richards shows how, despite the colonizers' best efforts to fashion themselves as superior, gaps and blindnesses in their own representations seem to betray them. In a similar way, Richards contrasts Malinowski's *Confessional Diary* and his exegetical *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*.

This process of double reading also shows up unusual links in disparate writers and thinkers in relation to the representation of racial and cultural difference. Richards shows how James Frazer, Ferdinand de Saussure, and structuralist-influenced anthropology echo each other in their taxonomic systems. He suggests that Eliot and Lévi-Strauss, in their re-reading and reconstruction of anthropological accounts of the Bororo people in Brazil, shared a project of developing a 'new understanding of the primitive and their relationship to modernity' (p. 215). Richards contrasts different accounts of anthropological subjectivity, concentrating on the 'postmodern' anthropology of Geertz and Clifford, with Neil Bussoundath's *A Casual Brutality* and its fictional Caribbean island of *Casaquemada*.

Richards disagrees with Bhabha and Bussoundath, who suggest that 'dislocated post-colonial identities cannot be constructed outside representation, except as absence' (p. 258) for Richards, this represents an 'anthropological manicheism' (p. 258). In contrast, Richards offers

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